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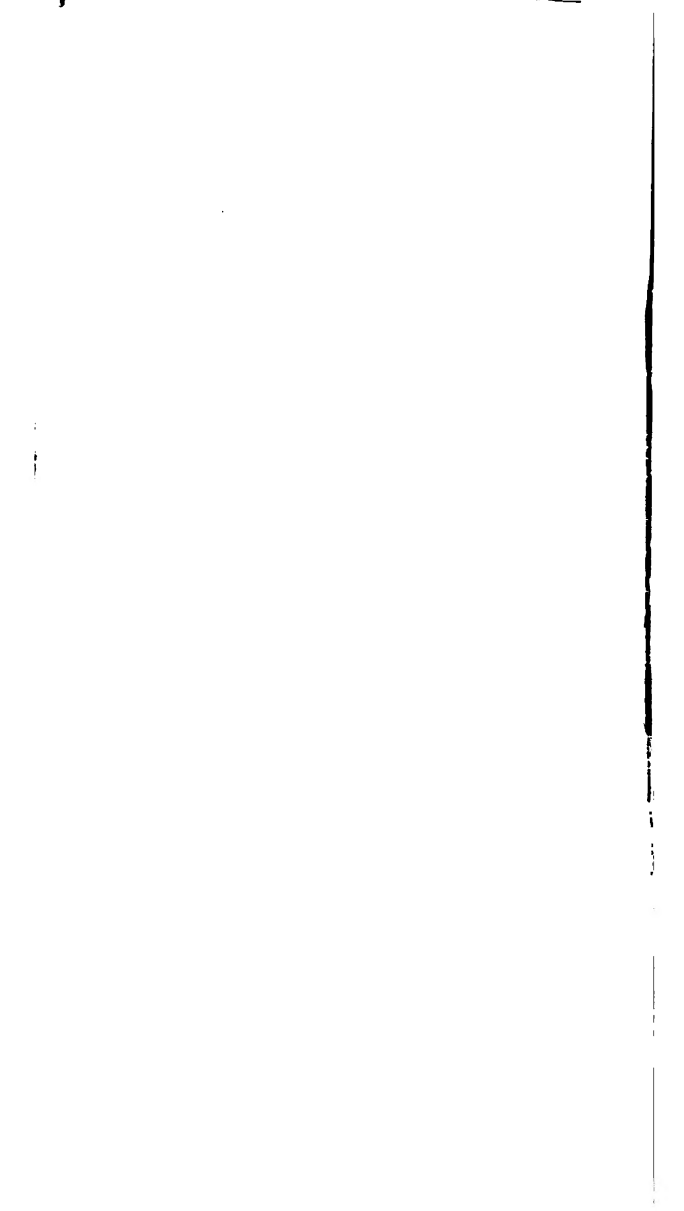
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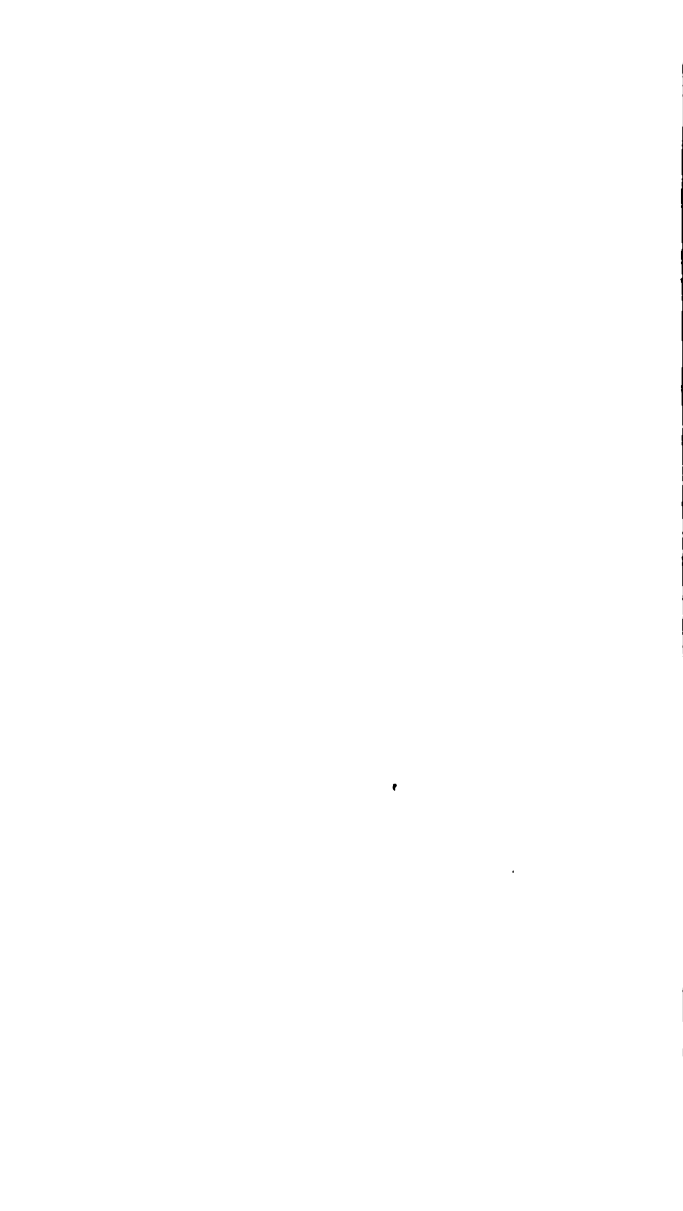
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ELOISA,
OR
A SERIES OF
ORIGINAL LETTERS.

COLLECTED AND PUBLISHED BY

Mr. J. J. ROUSSEAU,

CITIZEN OF GENEVA.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

THE ADVENTURES OF LORD B—— AT ROME.

BEING THE SEQUEL OF ELOISA.

(Found among the Author's Papers after his Decéase.)

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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Pt IV

E L O I S A.

LETTER CXX.

FROM MRS. WOLMAR TO MRS. ORBE.

How tedious is your stay! This going backward and forward is very disagreeable. How many hours are lost before you return to the place where you ought to remain for ever, and, therefore, how much worse is it for you ever to go away! The idea of seeing you for so short a time takes from the pleasure of your company.— Do not you perceive, that by residing at your own house and mine alternately, you are in fact at home in neither, and cannot you contrive some means by which you may make your abode in both at once?

What are we doing, my dear cousin? How many precious moments we lose, when we have none to waste! Years steal upon us; youth begins to vanish; life slides away imperceptibly; its momentary bliss is in our possession, and we refuse to enjoy it! Do you recollect the time when we were yet girls, those early days so agreeable and delightful, which no other time of life affords, and which the mind with so much difficulty forgets? How often, when we were obliged to

part for a few days, or even for a few hours, have we sadly embraced each other, and vowed that when we were our own mistresses we would never be asunder! We are now our own mistresses, and yet we pass one half of the year at a distance from each other. Is then our affection weaker? My dear and tender friend, we are both sensible how much time, habit, and your kindness have rendered our attachment more strong and indissoluble. As to myself, your absence daily becomes more insupportable, and I can no longer live for a moment without you. The progress of our friendship is more natural than it appears to be; it is founded not only on a similarity of character, but of condition. As we advance in years, our affections begin to centre in one point. We every day lose something that was dear to us, which we can never replace—Thus we perish by degrees, till at length, being wholly devoted to self love, we lose life and sensibility, even before our existence ceases. But a susceptible mind arms itself with all its force against this anticipated death: when a chillness begins to seize the extremities, it collects all the genial warmth of nature round its own centre; the more connexions it loses, the closer it cleaves to those which remain, and all its former ties are combined to attach it to the last object.

This is what, young as I am, I seem to experience. Ah! my dear, my poor heart has been too

susceptible of tender impressions ! It was so early exhausted, that it grew old before its time ; and so many different affections have absorbed it to that degree, that it has no room for any new attachments. You have known me in the successive capacities of a daughter, a friend, a mistress, a wife, and a mother. You know how every character has been dear to me ! Some of these connexions are utterly destroyed, others are weakened. My mother, my affectionate mother is no more ; tears are the only tribute I can pay to her memory, and I do but half enjoy the most agreeable sensations of nature. As to love, it is wholly extinguished, it is dead for ever, and has left a vacancy in my heart which will never be filled up again. We have lost your good and worthy husband, whom I loved as the dear part of yourself, and who was so well deserving of your friendship and tenderness. If my boys were grown up, maternal affection might supply these vacancies, but that affection, like all others, has need of participation, and what return can a mother expect from a child only four or five years old ? Our children are dear to us long before they are sensible of our love, or capable of returning it ; and yet how much we want to express the extravagance of our fondness to some one who can enter into our affection ! My husband loves them, but not with that degree of sensibility I could wish ;

he is not intoxicated with fondness as I am ! his tenderness for them is too rational : I would have it to be more lively and more like my own. In short, I want a friend, a mother who can be as extravagantly fond of my children, and her own, as myself. In a word the fondness of a mother makes the company of a friend more necessary to me, that I may enjoy the pleasure of talking continually about my children, without being troublesome. I feel double the pleasure in the caresses of my little Marcellinus, when I see that you share it with me. When I embrace your daughter I fancy that I press you to my bosom. We have observed a hundred times, on seeing our little cherubs at play together, that the union of our affections has so united them, that we have not been able to distinguish to which of us they severally belonged.

This is not all : I have powerful reasons for desiring to have you always near me, and your absence is painful to me in more respects than one. Think on my aversion to all hypocrisy, and reflect on the continual reserve in which I have lived upwards of six years towards the man whom I love above all others in the world. My odious secret oppresses me more and more, and my duty to reveal it seems every day more indispensable. The more I am prompted by honour to disclose it, the more I am obliged by prudence to conceal it. Consider what a horrid state it is, for a wife to

carry mistrust, falsehood, and fear, even to her husband's arms ; to be afraid of opening her heart to him who is master of it, and to conceal one half of my life, to ensure the peace of the other. Good God ! from whom do I conceal my secret thoughts, and hide the recesses of a soul with which he has so much reason to be satisfied ?— From my Wolmar, my husband ! and the most worthy husband with which Heaven ever rewarded the virtue of unsullied chastity. Having deceived him once, I am obliged to continue the deceit, and bear the mortification of finding myself unworthy of all the kindness he expresses.— My heart is afraid to receive any testimony of his esteem, his most tender caresses make me blush, and my conscience interprets all his marks of respect and attention into symptoms of reproach and disdain. It is a cruel pain constantly to harbour this remorse, which tells me that he mistakes the object of his esteem. Ah ! if he but knew me, he would not use me thus tenderly ! No, I cannot endure this horrid state : I am never alone with that worthy man, but I am ready to fall on my knees before him, to confess my fault, and to expire at his feet with grief and shame.

Nevertheless, the reasons which at first restrained me, acquire fresh strength every day, and every motive which might induce me to make the declaration, conspires to enjoin me silence. When I

consider the peaceable and tranquil state of our family, I cannot reflect without horror what an irreparable disturbance might be occasioned by a single word. After six years passed in perfect union, shall I venture to disturb the peace of so good and discreet a husband, who has no other will than that of his happy wife, no other pleasure than to see order and tranquillity throughout his family? Shall I afflict with domestic broils an aged father, who appears to be so contented, and so delighted with the happiness of his daughter and his friend? Shall I expose my dear children, those lovely and promising infants, to have their education neglected and shamefully slighted, to become the melancholy victims of family discord, between a father inflamed with just indignation, tortured with jealousy, and an unfortunate and guilty mother, always bathed in tears? I know what M. Wolmar is, now he esteems his wife; but how do I know what he will be when he no longer regards her? Perhaps he seems calm and moderate, because his predominant passion has had no room to display itself. Perhaps he would be as violent in the impetuosity of his anger, as he is gentle and composed, now he has nothing to provoke him.

If I owe such regard to every one about me, is not something likewise due to myself? Does not a virtuous and regular course of life for six years obliterate, in some measure, the errors of

youth, and am I still obliged to undergo the punishment of a failing which I have so long lamented? I confess, my dear cousin, that I look backwards with reluctance; the reflection humbles me to that degree, that it dispirits me, and I am too susceptible of shame, to endure the idea, without falling into a kind of despair. I must reflect on the time which has passed since my marriage, in order to recover myself. My present situation inspires me with a confidence of which those disagreeable reflections would deprive me, I love to nourish in my breast these returning sentiments of honour, the rank of a wife and mother exalts my soul, and supports me against the remorse of my former condition. When I view my children and their father about me, I fancy that every thing breathes an air of virtue, and they banish from my mind the disagreeable remembrance of my former frailties. Their innocence is the security of mine; they become dearer to me, by being the instruments of my reformation; and I think on the violation of honour with such horror, that I can scarce believe myself the same person who formerly was capable of forgetting its precepts. I perceive myself so different from what I was, so confirmed in my present state, that I am almost induced to consider what I have to declare, as a confession which

does not concern me, and which I am not obliged to make.

Such is the state of anxiety and uncertainty in which I am continually fluctuating in your absence. Do you know what may be the consequence of this one day or other? My father is soon to set out for Berne, and is determined not to return till he has put an end to a tedious lawsuit; not being willing to leave us the trouble of concluding it, and perhaps doubting our zeal in the prosecution of it. In the mean time, between his departure and his return, I shall be alone with my husband, and I perceive that it will then be impossible for me to keep the fatal secret any longer. When we have company, you know M. Wolmar often chooses to retire, and take a solitary walk: he chats with the peasants; he inquires into their situation; he examines the conditions of their grounds; and assists them, if they require it, both with his purse and his advice. But when we are alone, he never walks without me; he seldom leaves his wife and children, but enters into their little amusements with such an amiable simplicity, that on these occasions I always feel a more than common tenderness for him. In these tender moments, my reserve is in so much more danger, as he himself frequently gives me opportunities of throwing it aside, and has a hundred times held conversation with me which seemed to excite me to confidence. I perceive that soon-

er or later, I must disclose my mind to him ; but since you would have the confession concerted between us, and made with all the precaution which discretion requires, return to me immediately, or I can answer for nothing.

My dear friend, I must conclude, and yet what I had to add is of such importance, that you must allow me a few words more. You are not only of service to me when I am with my children and my husband, but above all when I am alone with poor Eloisa : solitude is more dangerous, because it grows agreeable to me, and I court it without intending it. It is not, as you are sensible, that my heart still smarts with the pain of its former wounds—no, they are cured—I perceive that they are—I am very certain, I dare believe myself virtuous. I am under no apprehensions about the present ; it is the time past which torments me. There are some reflections as dreadful as the original sensation ; the recollection moves us ; we are ashamed to find that we shed tears, and we do but weep the more. They are tears of compassion, regret, and repentance ; love has no share in them : I no longer harbour the least spark of love ; but I lament the mischiefs it has occasioned ; I bewail the fate of a worthy man, who has been bereft of peace, and perhaps of life, by gratifying an indiscreet passion. Alas ! he has undoubtedly perished in this long and dangerous

voyage, which he undertook out of despair. If he was living, he would send us tidings from the farthest part of the world; near four years have elapsed since his departure. They say the squadron on board of which he is has suffered a thousand disasters; that it hath lost three fourths of its crew; that several ships have gone to the bottom, and that no one can tell what is become of the rest. He is no more! he is no more! A secret foreboding tells me so. The unfortunate wretch has not been spared any more than so many others. The distresses of his voyage, and melancholy, still more fatal than all, have shortened his days. Thus vanishes every thing which glitters for a while on earth. The reproach of having occasioned the death of a worthy man was all that was wanting to complete the torments of my conscience. With what a soul was he endued! how susceptible of the tenderest love! He deserved to live!

I try in vain to dissipate these melancholy ideas; but they return every minute, in spite of me. Your friend requires your assistance, to enable her to banish, or to moderate them; and since I cannot forget this unfortunate man, I had rather talk of him with you, than think of him by myself.

You see how many reasons concur to make your company continually necessary to me. If you, who have been more discreet and fortunate,

are not moved by the same reasons, yet does not your inclination persuade you of the same necessity? If it is true that you will never marry again, having so little satisfaction in your family, what house can be more convenient for you than mine? For my part, I am in pain, as I know what you endure in your own; for, notwithstanding your dissimulation, I am no stranger to your manner of living, and I am not to be duped by those gay airs which you affected to display at Clarens. You have often reproached me with my failings; and I have a very great one to reproach you with in your turn; which is, that your grief is too solitary and confined. You get into a corner to indulge your affliction, as if you were ashamed to weep before your friend. Clara, I do not like this. I am not ungenerous like you; I do not condemn your tears. I would not have you cease at the end of two or ten years, or while you live, to honour the memory of so tender a husband; but I blame you, that after having passed the best of your days in weeping with your Eloisa, you rob her of the pleasure of weeping in her turn with you, and of washing away, by more honourable tears, the scandal of those which she shed in your bosom. If you are ashamed of your grief, you are a stranger to real affliction! If you find a kind of pleasure in it, why will you not let me partake of it? Are you ignorant that

a participation of affections communicates a soft and affecting quality to melancholy, which content never feels? And was not friendship particularly designed to alleviate the evils of the wretched, and lessen their pains?

Such, my dear, are the reflections you ought to indulge; to which I must add, that when I propose your coming to live with me, I make the proposal no less in my husband's name than my own. He has often expressed his surprise, and even been offended, that two such intimates as we should live asunder: he assures me that he has told you so, and he is not a man who talks inadvertently. I do not know what resolution you will take with respect to these proposals; I have reason to hope that it will be such as I could wish. However it be, mine is fixed and unalterable.— I have not forgotten the time when you would have followed me to England. My incomparable friend! it is now my turn. You know my dislike of the town, my taste for the country, for rural occupations, and how strongly a residence of three years has attached me to my house at Clarendon. You are no stranger likewise to the trouble of removing a whole family, and you are sensible that it would be abusing my father's good nature to oblige him to move so often. Therefore, if you will not leave your family, and come to govern mine, I am determined to take a house at Lausanne, where we will all live with you.—

Prepare yourself, therefore ; every thing requires it ; my inclination, my duty, my happiness. The security of my honour, the recovery of my reason, my condition, my husband, my children, myself, I owe all to you ; I am indebted to you for all the blessings I enjoy ; I see nothing but what reminds me of your goodness, and without you I am nothing. Come then, my much loved friend, my guardian angel ; come and enjoy the work of your own hands ; come and gather the fruits of your benevolence. Let us have but one family, as we have but one soul to cherish it ; you shall superintend the education of my sons, and I will take care of your daughter ; we will share the maternal duties between us, and make our pleasure double. We will raise our minds together to the contemplation of that Being, who purified mine by means of your endeavours ; and having nothing more to hope for in this life, we will quietly wait for the next, in the bosom of innocence and friendship.

LETTER CXXI.

ANSWER.

GOOD Heaven ! my dear cousin, how I am delighted with your letter ! Thou lovely preacher ! . . . Lovely indeed : but in the preaching strain nevertheless. What a charming peroration ! A perfect model of ancient oratory. The Athenian

architect! That florid speaker!
You remember him In your old Plutarch
. . . . Pompous descriptions, superb temple! . .
When he had finished his harangue, comes another; a plain man; with a grave, sober, and unaffected air . . . who answered as your cousin Clara might do . . . with a low, hollow, and deep tone . . . *All that he has said, I will do.*
—Here he ended, and the assembly rang with applause! Peace to the man of words. My dear, we may be considered in the light of these two architects; and the temple in question is that of Friendship.

But let us recapitulate all the fine things you have said to me. First, that we loved each other; secondly, that my company was necessary to you; thirdly, that yours was necessary to me, likewise; and lastly, that as it was in our power to live together the rest of our days, we ought to do it. And you have really discovered all this without a guide. In truth thou art a woman of vast eloquence! Well, but let me tell you how I was employed on my part, while you was composing this sublime epistle. After that I will leave you to judge, whether what you say, or what I do, is most to the purpose.

I had no sooner lost my husband, than you supplied the vacancy he had left in my heart. While he was living, he shared my affections with you: when he was gone, I was yours entirely, and, as

you observe, with respect to the conformity of friendship and maternal affection, my daughter was an additional tie to unite us. I not only determined, from that time, to pass my days with you, but I formed a more enlarged plan. The more effectually to blend our two families into one, I proposed, on a supposition that all circumstances prove agreeable, to marry my daughter some day or other to your eldest son, and the name of husband, assumed in jest, seemed to be a lucky omen of his taking it one day in earnest.

With this view, I endeavoured immediately to put an end to the trouble of a contested inheritance; and finding that my circumstances enabled me to sacrifice some part of my claim in order to settle the rest, I thought of nothing but placing my daughter's fortune in some sure funds, where it might be secure from any apprehensions of a law-suit. You know that I am whimsical in most things; my whim in this was to surprise you. I intended to come into your room one morning early, with my child in one hand, and the parchment in the other; and to have presented them both to you, with a fine compliment on committing to your care the mother, the daughter, and their effects, that is to say, my child's fortune. Govern her, I proposed, to have said, as best suits the interest of your son; for, from henceforwards, it is your concern and his; for my own part, I shall trouble myself about her no longer.

Full of this pleasing idea, it was necessary for me to open my mind to somebody who might assist me to execute my project. Guess now whom I chose for a confidant? One M. Wolmar. Should you not know him? "My husband, cousin." Yes, your husband, cousin. The very man from whom you make such a difficulty of concealing a secret, which it is of consequence to him never to know, is he who has kept a secret from you, the discovery of which would have given you so much pleasure. This was the true subject of all that mysterious conversation between us, about which you used to banter us with so much humour. You see what hypocrites these husbands are. Is it not very droll in them to accuse us of dissimulation? But I required much more of your husband. I perceived that you had the same plan which I had in view, but you kept it more to yourself, as one who did not care to communicate her thoughts, till she was led to the discovery. With an intent, therefore, to make your surprise more agreeable, I would have had him, when you proposed our living together, to have seemed as if he disapproved of your eagerness, and to have given his consent with reluctance. To this he made me an answer, which I well remember, and which you ought never to forget: for since the first existence of husbands, I doubt whether any one of them ever made such an answer before. It was as follows: "My dear

“ little cousin, I know Eloisa . . . : . I know
“ her well better than she imagines,
“ perhaps, . . . her generosity of heart is so
“ great, that what she desires ought not be re-
“ fused, and her sensibility is too strong to bear
“ a denial, without being afflicted. During
“ these five years that we have been married, I
“ do not know that I have given her the least
“ uneasiness ; and I hope to die without ever
“ being the cause of her feeling a moment’s
“ inquietude.” Cousin, reflect on this : this is
the husband whose peace of mind you are incessantly meditating to disturb :

For my part, I had less delicacy, or more gentleness of disposition, and I so naturally diverted the conversation to which your affection so frequently led you, that as you could not tax me with coldness or indifference towards you, you took it into your head that I had a second marriage in view, and that I loved you better than any thing, except a husband. You see, my dear child, your most inmost thoughts do not escape me. I guess your meaning, I penetrate your designs ; I enter into the bottom of your soul, and for that reason I have always adored you. This suspicion, which so opportunely led you into a mistake, appeared to me well worth encouraging. I took upon me to play the part of the coquetish widow, which I acted so well as to deceive even you. It is a part for which I have more ta-

lents than inclination. I skilfully employed that piquant air which I know how to put on, and with which I have entertained myself in making a jest of more than one young coxcomb. You have been absolutely the dupe of my affectation, and you thought me in haste to supply the place of a man, to whom of all others it would be most difficult to fit a successor. But I am too ingenuous to play the counterfeit long, and your apprehensions were soon removed. But to confirm you the more, I will explain to you my real sentiments on that head.

I have told you an hundred times, when I was a maid, that I was never designed for a wife. Had my determination depended on myself alone, I should never have married. But our sex cannot purchase liberty but by slavery; and, before we can become our own mistresses, we must begin by being servants. Though my father did not confine me, I was not without uneasiness in my family. To free myself from that vexation, therefore, I married Mr. Orbe. He was such a worthy man, and loved me with such tenderness, that I most sincerely loved him in my turn. Experience gave me a more advantageous opinion of marriage than I had conceived of it, and effaced those ill impressions I had received from Chaillot. Mr. Orbe made me happy, and did not repent his endeavours. I should have discharged my duty with any other, but I should have vexed him, and

I am sensible that nothing but so good a husband could have made me a tolerable wife. Would you think that even this afforded me matter of complaint? My dear, we loved each other too affectionately; we were never gay. A slighter friendship would have been more sprightly; I should even have preferred it; and I think I should have chosen to have lived with less content, if I could have laughed oftener.

Add to this, that the particular circumstances of your situation gave me uneasiness. I need not remind you of the dangers to which an unruly passion exposed you. I reflect on them with horror. If you had only hazarded your life, perhaps I might have retained some remains of gaiety; but terror and grief pierced my soul, and till I saw you married, I did not enjoy one moment of real pleasure. You are no stranger to my affliction at that time; you felt it. It had great influence over your good disposition, and I shall always bless those fortunate tears, which were probably the occasion of your return to virtue.

In this manner I passed all the time that I lived with my husband. Since it has pleased the Almighty to take him from me, judge whether I can hope to find another so much to my mind, and whether I have any temptation to make the experiment? No, cousin, matrimony is too serious a state for me; its gravity does not suit with my humour; it makes me dull, and sits awkward-

ly upon me; not to mention that all constraint whatever is intolerable to me. Consider, you who know me, what charms can an attachment have in my eyes, during which, for seven years together, I have not laughed seven times heartily! I do not propose, like you, to turn matron at eight-and-twenty. I find myself a smart little widow, likely to get a husband still, and I think that if I were a man, I should have no objection to such a one as myself. But to marry again, cousin! Hear me; I sincerely lament my poor husband; I would have given up one half of my days, to have passed the other half with him; and, nevertheless, could he return to life, I should take him again for no other reason, than because I had taken him before:

I have declared to you my real intentions. If I have not been able to put them in execution, notwithstanding M. Wolmar's kind endeavours, it is because difficulties seem to increase, as my zeal to surmount them strengthens. But my zeal will always gain the ascendancy, and, before the summer is over, I hope to return to you for the remainder of my days.

I must now vindicate myself from the reproach of concealing my uneasiness, and choosing to weep alone: I do not deny it; and this is the way I spend the most agreeable time I pass here. I never enter my house, but I perceive some traces which remind me of him who made it agreeable.

to me. I cannot take a step, I cannot view a single object, without perceiving some signs of his tenderness and goodness of heart; and would you have my mind to be unaffected? When I am here, I am sensible of nothing but the loss I have sustained. When I am near you, I view all the comfort I have left. Can you make your influence over my disposition a crime in me? If I weep in your absence, and laugh in your company, whence proceeds the difference? Ungrateful woman! it is because you alleviate all my afflictions, and I cannot grieve while I enjoy your society.

You have said a great deal in favour of our long friendship; but I cannot pardon you for omitting a circumstance, that does me most honour; which is, that I love you, though you eclipse me! Eloisa, you were born to rule. Your empire is more despotic than any in the world. It extends even over the will, and I am sensible of it more than any one. How happens it, my Eloisa? We are both in love with virtue; honour is equally dear to us; our talents are the same; I have very near as much spirit as you; and am not less handsome: I am sensible of all this, and yet, notwithstanding all, you prescribe to me, you overcome me, you cast me down, your genius crushes mine, and I am nothing before you. Even while you were engaged in an attachment with which you reproached yourself, and that I,

who had not copied your failing, might have taken the lead in my turn, yet the ascendancy still remained in you. The frailty I condemned in you appeared to me almost in the light of a virtue; I could scarce forbear admiring in you what I should have censured in another. In short, even at that time, I never accosted you without a sensible emotion of involuntary respect; and it is certain, that nothing but your gentleness and affability of manners could entitle me to the rank of your friend: by nature, I ought to be your servant. Explain this mystery if you can; for my part, I am at a loss how to solve it.

But, after all, I do in some measure conceive the reason, and I believe that I have explained it before now. The reason is, that your disposition enlivens every one round you, and gives them a kind of new existence, for which they are bound to adore you, since they derive it entirely from you. It is true, I have done you some signal services; you have so often acknowledged them, that it is impossible for me to forget them. I cannot deny but that, without my assistance, you had been utterly undone. But what did I do, more than return the obligation I owed you? Is it possible to have a long acquaintance with you, without finding one's mind impressed with the charms of virtue, and the delights of friendship? Do not you know that you have power to arm in your defence every one who approaches you, and that

I have no advantage whatever over others, but that of being, like the guards of Sesostris, of the same age and sex, and of having been brought up with you. However it be, it is some comfort to Clara, that though she is of less estimation than Eloisa, yet, without Eloisa, she would be of less value still ; and, in short, to tell you the truth, I think that we stood in great need of each other and that we should both have been losers if fate had parted us.

I am chiefly concerned, lest, while my affairs detain me here, you should discover your secret, which you are every minute ready to disclose. Consider, I entreat you, that there are solid and powerful reasons for concealing it, and that nothing but a mistaken principle can tempt you to reveal it. Besides, our suspicion that it is no longer a secret to him who is most interested in the discovery, is an additional argument against making any declaration without the greatest circumspection. Perhaps your husband's reserve may serve as an example and a lesson to us : for in such cases there is very often a great difference between pretending to be ignorant of a thing, and being obliged to know it. Stay, therefore, I beseech you, till we consult once more on this affair. If your apprehensions were well grounded, and your lamented friend was no more, the best resolution you could take, would be to let your history and his misfortunes be buried to-

gether. If he is alive, as I hope he is, the case may be different; but let us wait till we are sure of the event. In every state of the case, do not you think that you ought to pay some regard to the advice of an unfortunate wretch, whose evils all spring from you?

With respect to the danger of solitude, I conceive, and cannot condemn your fears, though I am persuaded that they are ill-founded. Your past terrors have made you fearful; but I presage better of the time present, and you would be less apprehensive, if you had more reason to be so. But I cannot approve of your anxiety with regard to the fate of our poor friend. Now your affections have taken a different turn, believe me, he is as dear to me as to yourself. Nevertheless, I have forebodings quite contrary to yours, and more agreeable to reason. Lord B—— has heard from him twice, and wrote to me on the receipt of the last letter, to acquaint me that he was in the South-Seas, and had already escaped all the dangers you apprehend. You know all this as well as I, and yet you are as uneasy as if you were a stranger to these particulars. But there is a circumstance you are ignorant of, and of which I must inform you; it is, that the ship on which he is on board was seen two months ago off the Canaries, making sail for Europe. This is the account my father received from Holland, which he did not fail to transmit to me; for it is

his custom to be more punctual in informing me concerning public affairs, than in acquainting me with his own private concerns. My heart tells me that it will not be long before we hear news of our philosopher, and that your tears will be dried up, unless, after having lamented him as dead, you should weep to find him alive. But, thank God, you are no longer in danger from your former weakness.

*Deh ! fosse or qui quel miser pur un poco,
Ch' e gia di piangere e di viver lasso !*

Alas ! what fears should heighten your concern,
So us'd in listless solitude to mourn !

This is the sum of my answer. Your affectionate friend proposes and shares with you the agreeable expectation of a lasting reunion. You find that you are neither the first, nor the only author of this project ; and that the execution of it is more forward than you imagine. Have patience, therefore, my dear friend, for this summer. It is better to delay our meeting for some time, than to be under the necessity of parting again.

Well, good madam, have not I been as good as my word, and is not my triumph complete ? Come, fall on your knees, kiss this letter with respect, and humbly acknowledge, that, once in her life, at least, Eloisa Wolmar has been outdone in friendship.

LETTER CXXII.

TO MRS. ORBE.

MY dear cousin, my benefactress, my friend! I come from the extremities of the earth, and bring a heart still full of affection for you. I have crossed the line four times; have traversed the two hemispheres; have seen the four quarters of the globe; its diameter has been between us: I have been quite round it, and yet could not escape from you one moment. It is in vain to fly from the object of our adoration: the image, more fleet than the winds, pursues us from the end of the world; and, wherever we transport ourselves, we bear with us the idea by which we are animated. I have endured a great deal; I have seen others suffer more. How many unhappy wretches have I seen perish! Alas! they rated life at a high price! And yet I survived them . . . : Perhaps my condition was less to be pitied; the miseries of my companions affected me more than my own. I am wretched here (said I to myself), but there is a corner of the earth where I am happy and tranquil; and the prospect of felicity, beside the lake of Geneva, made me amends for what I suffered on the ocean. I have the pleasure, on my return, to have my hopes confirmed: Lord B—— informs me, that you both enjoy health and peace; and that if you in particular have lost the agreeable distinction of a wife,

you nevertheless retain the title of a friend and mother, which may contribute to your happiness.

I am at present too much in haste to send you a detail of my voyage in this letter. I dare hope that I shall soon have a more convenient opportunity ; mean time I must be content to give you a slight sketch, rather to excite than gratify your curiosity. I have been near four years in making this immense tour, and returned in the same ship in which I set sail ; the only one of the whole squadron which we have brought back to England.

I have seen South-America, that vast continent, which, for want of arms, has been obliged to submit to the Europeans, who have made it a desert, in order to secure their dominion. I have seen the coasts of Brasil from whence Lisbon and London draw their treasures, and where the miserable natives tread upon gold and diamonds, without daring to lay hands on them for their own use. I crossed, in mild weather, those stormy seas under the Antarctic circle, and met with the most horrible tempests in the Pacific Ocean.

*E in mar dubbio sotto ignoto polo
Provai l'onde fallaci, e l' vento infido.*

Have brav'd the unknown seas, where, near the pole,
Blow faithless winds, and waves deceitful roll.

I have seen, at a distance, the abode of those supposed giants, who are no otherwise greater than the rest of their species, than as they are more courageous, and who maintain their independence more by a life of simplicity and frugality, than by their extraordinary stature. I made a residence of three months in a desert and delightful island, which afforded an agreeable and lively representation of the primitive beauty of nature, and which seems to be fixed at the extremity of the world, to serve as an asylum to innocence and persecuted love; but the greedy European indulges his brutal disposition, in preventing the peaceful Indian from residing there, and does justice on himself, by not making it his own abode.

I have seen, in the rivers of Mexico and Peru, the same scenes as at Brasil; I have seen the few wretched inhabitants, the sad remains of two powerful nations, loaded with irons, ignomy, and misery, weeping in the midst of their precious metals, and reproaching Heaven for having lavished such treasures upon them. I have seen the dreadful conflagration of a whole city, which perished in the flames, without having made any resistance or defence. Such is the right of war among the intelligent, humane, and refined Europeans! They are not satisfied with doing the enemy all the mischief from whence they can reap any advantage, but they reckon as clear

gain all the destruction they can make among his possessions. I have coasted along almost the whole western part of America, not without being struck with admiration, on beholding fifteen hundred leagues of coast, and the greatest sea in the world, under the dominion of a single potentate, who may be said to keep the keys of one hemisphere.

After having crossed this vast sea I beheld a new scene on the other continent. I have seen the most numerous and most illustrious nation in the world in subjection to a handful of banditti; I have had near intercourse with this famous people, and I do not wonder that they are slaves.—As often conquered as attacked, they have always been a prey to the first invader, and possibly will be so to the end of the world. They are well suited to their servile state, since they have not the courage even to complain. They are learned, lazy, hypocritical, and deceitful: they talk a great deal, without saying any thing to the purpose; they are full of spirit without any genius; they abound in signs, but are barren in ideas; they are polite, full of compliments, dexterous, crafty, and knavish; they comprise all the duties of life in trifles; all morality in grimace, and have no other idea of humanity, than what consists in bows and salutations. I landed upon a second desert island, more unknown, more delight-

ful still than the first, and where the most cruel accident had like to have confined us for ever. I was the only one, perhaps, whom so agreeable an exile did not terrify : am I not doomed to be an exile every where ? In this place of terror and delight I saw the attempts of human industry to disengage a civilized being from a solitude where he wants nothing, and plunge him into an abyss of new necessities.

On the vast ocean, where one would imagine men would be glad to meet with their own species, I have seen two great ships sail up to each other, join, attack, and fight together with fury, as if that immense space was too little for either of them. I have seen them discharge flames and bullets against each other. In a fight which was not of long duration, I have seen the picture of hell. I have heard the triumphant shouts of the conqueror drown the cries of the wounded, and the groans of the dying. I blushed to receive my share of an immense plunder ; but received it in the nature of a trust, and as it was taken from the wretched, to the wretched it shall be restored.

I have seen Europe transported to the extremities of Africa, by the labours of that avaricious, patient, and industrious people, who by time and perseverance have surmounted difficulties which all the heroism of other nations could never overcome. I have seen those immense and miserable countries, which seem destined to no other pur-

pose than to cover the earth with herds of slaves. At their vile appearance, I turned away my eyes, out of disdain, horror, and pity; and on beholding one fourth part of my fellow creatures transformed into beasts, for the service of the rest, I could not forbear lamenting that I was a man.

Lastly, I beheld, in my fellow travellers, a bold and intrepid people, whose freedom and example retrieved, in my opinion, the honour of the species; a people who despised pain and death, and who dreaded nothing but hunger and disquiet. In their commander, I beheld a captain, a soldier, a pilot, a prudent and great man, and to say still more perhaps, a friend worthy of Lord B——. But, throughout the whole world, I have never met with any resemblance of Clara Orbe, or Eloisa Etange, or found one who could recompense a heart truly sensible of their worth for the loss of their society.

How shall I speak of my cure? It is from you that I must learn how far it is perfect. Do I return more free and more discreet than I departed! I dare believe that I do, and yet I cannot affirm it. The same image has constant possession of my heart; you know how impossible it is for me ever to efface it; but her dominion over me is more worthy of her, and, if I do not deceive myself, she holds the same empire in my

heart as in your own. Yes, my dear cousin, her virtue has subdued me; I am now, with regard to her, nothing more than a most sincere and tender friend; my adoration of her is of the same nature with yours; or rather, my affections do not seem to be weakened, but rectified; and, however nicely I examine, I find them to be as pure as the object which inspires them. What can I say more, till I am put to the proof, by which I may be able to form a right judgment of myself? I am honest and sincere; I will be what I ought to be; but how shall I answer for my affections, when I have so much reason to mistrust them? Have I power over the past? How can I avoid recollecting a thousand passions which have formerly distracted me? How shall my imagination distinguish what is, from what has been? And how shall I consider her as a friend, whom I never yet saw but as a mistress? Whatever you may think of the secret motive of my eagerness, it is honest and rational, and merits your approbation. I will answer beforehand, at least for my intentions. Permit me to see you, and examine me yourself, or allow me to see Eloisa, and I shall then know my own heart.

I am to attend Lord B—— into Italy. Shall I pass close by your house, and not see you? Do you think this possible? Alas! if you are so cruel to require it, you ought not to be obeyed! But, why should you desire it? Are you not

the same Clara, as kind and compassionate as you are virtuous and discreet, who condescended from her infancy to love me, and who ought to love me still more, now that I am indebted to her for every thing*? No, my dear and lovely friend, such a cruel denial will not become you; nor will it be just to me: it shall not put the finishing stroke to my misery. Once more, once more in my life, I will lay my heart at your feet. I will see you, you shall consent to an interview. I will see Eloisa likewise, and she too shall give her consent. You are both of you too sensible of my regard for her. Can you believe me capable of making this request, if I found myself unworthy to appear in her presence? She has long since bewailed the effects of her charms, ah! let her for once behold the fruits of her virtue!

P. S.—Lord B——’s affairs detain him here for some time: if I may be allowed to see you, why should not I get the start of him, to be with you the sooner?

* What great obligations has he to her, who occasioned all the misfortunes of his life?—Yes, mistaken querist! he is indebted to her for the honour, the virtue, and peace of his beloved Eloisa: he owes her every thing.

LETTER CXXIII.

FROM MR. WOLMAR.

THOUGH we are not yet acquainted, I am commanded to write to you. The most discreet and most beloved wife has lately disclosed her heart to her happy husband. He thinks you worthy to have been the object of her affections, and he makes you an offer of his house. Peace and innocence reign in this mansion; you will meet with friendship, hospitality, esteem, and confidence. Examine your heart, and if you find nothing there to deter you, come without any apprehensions. You will not depart from him, without leaving behind you at least one friend, by name

WOLMAR.

P. S.—Come, my friend, we expect you with eagerness. I hope I need not fear a denial:

ELOISA.

LETTER CXXIV.

FROM MRS. ORBE:

In which the preceding Letter was enclosed.

WELCOME, welcome, a thousand times, dear St. Preux! for I intend that you shall retain that

name, at least among us. I suppose it will be sufficient to tell you, that you will not be excluded, unless you mean to exclude yourself. When you find, by the enclosed letter, that I have done more than you required of me, you will learn to put more confidence in your friends, and not to reproach them on account of those inquietudes which they participate when they are under the necessity of making you uneasy. Mr. Wolmar has a desire to see you ; he makes you an offer of his house, his friendship, and his advice ; this is more than requisite to quiet my apprehensions with regard to your journey, and I should injure myself, if I mistrusted you one moment. Mr. Wolmar goes farther, he pretends to accomplish your cure, and he says that neither Eloisa, you, nor I, can be perfectly happy till it is complete. Though I have great confidence in his wisdom, and more in your virtue, yet I cannot answer for the success of this undertaking. This I know, that, considering the disposition of his wife, the pains he proposes to take is out of pure generosity to you.

Come then, my worthy friend, in all the security of an honest heart, and satisfy the eagerness with which we all long to embrace you, and to see you easy and contented ; come to your native land, and in the midst of your friends rest yourself after all your travels, and forget all the hardships.

you have undergone. The last time you saw me I was a grave matron, and my friend was on the brink of the grave; but now, as she is well, and I am once more single, you will find me as gay and almost as handsome as ever. One thing, however, is very certain, that I am not altered with respect to you, and you may travel many times round the world, and not find one who has so sincere a regard for you as your, &c.

LETTER CXXV.

TO LORD B——.

JUST risen from my bed: 'tis yet the dead of night. I cannot rest a moment. My heart is so transported, that I can scarce confine it within me. You, my lord, who have so often rescued me from despair, shall be the worthy confidant of the first pleasure I have tasted for many a year.

I have seen her, my lord! my eyes have beheld her! I have heard her voice. I have pressed her hand with my lips. She recollected me; she received me with joy; she called me her friend, her dear friend; she admitted me into her house: I am happier than ever I was in my life. I lodge under the same roof with her, and while I am writing to you, we are scarce thirty paces asunder:

My ideas are too rapid to be expressed ; they crowd upon me all at once, and naturally impede each other. I must pause a while to digest my narrative into some kind of method.

After so long an absence, I had scarce given way to the first transports of my heart, while I embraced you as a friend, my deliverer, and my father, before you thought of taking a journey to Italy. You made me wish for it, in hopes of relief from the burden of being useless to you. As you could not immediately dispatch the affairs which detained you in London, you proposed my going first, that I might have more time to wait for you here. I begged leave to come hither ; I obtained it, set out, and though Eloisa made the first advances towards an interview, yet the pleasing reflection that I was going to meet her was checked by the regret of leaving you. My lord, we are now even ; this single sentiment has cancelled my obligations to you.

I need not tell you that my thoughts were all the way taken up with the object of my journey ; but I must observe one thing, that I began to consider that same object, which had never quitted my imagination, quite in another point of view. Till then I used to recall Eloisa to my mind, sparkling, as formerly, with all the charms of youth. I had always beheld her lovely eyes enlivened by that passion with which she inspired me. Every feature which I admired, seemed, in

my opinion, to be a surety of my happiness. My affection was so interwoven with the idea of her person, that I could not separate them. Now I was going to see Eloisa married, Eloisa a mother, Eloisa indifferent! I was disturbed when I reflected how much an interval of eight years might have impaired her beauty. She had had the small-pox, she was altered, how great might that alteration be! My imagination obstinately refused to allow any blemish in that lovely face. I reflected likewise on the expected interview between us, and what kind of reception I might expect. The first meeting presented itself to my mind under a thousand different appearances, and this momentary idea crossed my imagination a thousand times a day.

When I perceived the top of the hills, my heart beat violently, and told me, *There she is!* I was affected in the same manner at sea, on viewing the coasts of Europe. I felt the same emotions at Meillerie, when I discovered the house of the Baron d'Etange. The world, in my imagination, is divided only into two regions, *that* where she is, and *that* where she is not. The former dilates as I remove from her, and contracts when I approach her, as a spot where I am destined never to arrive. It is at present confined to the walls of her chamber. Alas! that place alone is inhabited; all the rest of the universe is an empty space.

The nearer I drew to Switzerland, the more I was agitated. That instant in which I discovered the lake of Geneva from the heights of Jura, was a moment of rapture and ecstasy. The sight of my country, that beloved country, where a deluge of pleasures had overflowed my heart; the pure and wholesome air of the Alps; the gentle breeze of the country, more sweet than the perfumes of the East; that rich and fertile spot, that unrivalled landscape, the most beautiful that ever struck the eye of man, that delightful abode, to which I found nothing comparable in the vast tour of the globe; the aspect of a free and happy people; the mildness of the season, the serenity of the climate: a thousand pleasing recollections, which recalled to my mind the pleasures I had enjoyed: all these circumstances together threw me into a kind of transport which I cannot describe, and seemed to collect the enjoyment of my whole life into one happy moment. Having crossed the lake, I felt a new impression, of which I had no idea. It was a certain emotion of fear, which checked my heart, and disturbed me in spite of all my endeavours. This dread, of which I could not discover the cause, increased as I drew nearer to the town; it abated my eagerness to get thither, and rose to such a height, that my expedition gave me as much uneasiness as my delay had occasioned me before. When I came to Vevai, I felt a sensa-

tion which was very far from being agreeable. I was seized with a violent palpitation, which stopped my breath, so that I spoke with a trembling and broken accent. I could scarce make myself understood when I inquired for M. Wolmar; for I durst not mention his wife. They told me he lived at Clarens. This information eased my breast from a pressure equal to five hundred weight, and considering the two leagues I had to travel farther as a kind of respite, I was rejoiced at a circumstance which at any other time would have made me uneasy; but I learnt with concern that Mrs. Orbe was at Lausanne. I went into an inn to recruit my strength, but could not swallow a morsel: and when I attempted to drink, I was almost suffocated, and could not empty a glass but at several sips. When I saw the horses put to, my apprehensions were doubled. I believe I should have given any thing in the world to have had one of the wheels broken by the way. I no longer saw Eloisa: my disturbed imagination presented nothing but confused objects before me; my soul was in a general tumult. I had experienced grief and despair, and should have preferred them to that horrible state. In a few words, I can assure you, that I never in my life underwent such cruel agitation as I suffered in this little way, and I am persuaded that I could not have supported it a whole day.

When I arrived, I ordered the chaise to stop

at the gate, and finding that I was not in a condition to walk, I sent the postillion to acquaint M. Wolmar that a stranger wanted to speak with him. He was taking a walk with his wife. They were acquainted with the message, and came round another way, while I kept my eyes fixed on the avenue, and waited in a kind of trance, in expectation of seeing somebody come from thence.

Eloisa had no sooner perceived me than she recollected me. In an instant, she saw me, she shrieked, she ran, she leaped into my arms. At the sound of her voice I started, I revived, I saw her, I felt her. O my lord! O my friend! I cannot speak. . . . Her look, her shriek, her manner inspired me with confidence, courage, and strength in an instant. In her arms I felt warmth, and breathed new life. A sacred transport kept us for some time closely embraced in deep silence; and it was not till after we recovered from this agreeable delirium that our voices broke forth in confused murmurs, and our eyes intermingled tears. M. Wolmar was present; I knew he was, I saw him, but what was I capable of seeing? No, though the whole universe had been united against me; though a thousand torments had surrounded me, I would not have detached my heart from the least of those caresses, those tender offerings of a pure and sacred friendship, which we will bear with us to Heaven.

When the violent impetuosity of our first meeting began to abate, Mrs. Wolmar took me by the hand, and turning towards her husband she said to him, with a certain air of candour and innocence which instantly affected me, "Though he is my old acquaintance, I do not present him to you, but I receive him from you, and he will hereafter enjoy my friendship no longer than he is honoured with yours."—"If new friends (said M. Wolmar, embracing me) express less natural ardour than those of long standing, yet they will grow old in their turn, and will not yield to any in affection." I received his embraces; but my heart had quite exhausted itself, and I was entirely passive.

After this short scene was over, I observed, by a side-glance, that they had put up my chaise, and taken off my trunk. Eloisa held by my arm, and I went with them towards the house, almost overwhelmed with pleasure, to find they were determined I should remain their guest.

It was then, that upon a more calm contemplation of that lovely face, which I imagined might have grown homely, I saw with an agreeable, yet sad surprise, that she was really more beautiful and sparkling than ever. Her charming features are now more regular; she is grown rather fatter, which is an addition to the resplendent fairness of her complexion. The

Small-pox has left some slight marks on her cheeks scarce perceptible. Instead of that mortifying bathfulness which formerly used to make her cast her eyes downwards, you may perceive in her chaste looks the security of virtue allied with gentleness and sensibility; her countenance, though not less modest, is less timid; an air of greater freedom, and more liberal grace, has succeeded that constrained carriage which was compounded of shame and tenderness; and if a sense of her failing rendered her then more bewitching, a consciousness of her purity now renders her more celestial.

We had scarce entered the parlour, when she disappeared, and returned in a minute. She did not come alone. Who do you think she brought with her? Her children! Those two lovely little ones, more beauteous than the day; in whose infant faces you might trace all the charms and features of their mother. How was I agitated at this sight? It is neither to be described nor conceived. A thousand different emotions seized me at once. A thousand cruel and delightful reflections divided my heart. What a lovely sight! What bitter regrets! I found myself distracted with grief, and transported with joy. I saw, if I may be allowed the expression, the dear object of my affections multiplied before me. Alas! I perceived at the same time too convincing a proof that I had no longer any interest

in her, and my losses seemed to be multiplied with her increase.

She led them towards me. "Behold (said she, with an affecting tone, that pierced my soul) behold the children of your friend; they will hereafter be your friends. Henceforward I hope you will be theirs." And immediately the two little creatures ran eagerly to me, took me by the hand, and so overwhelmed me with their innocent caresses, that every motion of my soul centered in tenderness. I took them both in my arms, and pressing them against my throbbing breast, "Dear and lovely little creatures (said I, with a sigh) you have an arduous task to perform. May you resemble the authors of your being; may you imitate their virtues; and by your own, hereafter administer comfort to their unfortunate friends." Mrs. Wolmar in rapture threw herself round my neck a second time, and seemed disposed to repay me, by *her* embraces, those caresses which *I* had bestowed on her two sons. But how different was this from our first embrace! I perceived the difference with astonishment. It was the mother of a family whom I now embraced. I saw her surrounded by her husband and children: and the scene struck me with awe. I discovered an air of dignity in her countenance, which had not affected me till now: I found myself obliged to pay her a different kind of respect; her familiarity was almost uneasy to me; lovely

as she appeared to me, I could have kissed the hem of her garment with a better grace than I saluted her cheek. In a word, from that moment I perceived that either she or I were no longer the same, and I began in earnest to have a good opinion of myself.

M. Wolmar at length took me by the hand, and conducted me to the apartment which had been prepared for me. "This (said he, as he entered) is your apartment: it is not destined to the use of a stranger: it shall never belong to another, and hereafter, if you do not occupy it, it shall remain empty." You may judge whether such a compliment was not agreeable to me; but as I had not yet deserved it, I could not hear it without confusion. M. Wolmar, however, spared me the trouble of an answer. He invited me to take a turn in the garden. His behaviour there was such as made me less reserved, and assuming the air of a man who was well acquainted with my former indiscretions, but who entirely confided in my integrity, he conversed with me as a father would speak to his child; and by conciliating my esteem, made it impossible for me ever to deceive him. No, my lord, he is not mistaken in me; I shall never forget that it is incumbent on me to justify his and your good opinion. But why should my heart reject his favours? Why should the man whom I am bound to love be the husband of Eloisa?

That day seemed destined to put me to every kind of proof which I could possibly undergo. After we had joined Mrs. Wolmar, her husband was called away to give some necessary orders, and I was left alone with her:

I then found myself involved in fresh perplexity, more painful and more unexpected than any which I had yet experienced. What should I say to her? How could I address her? Should I presume to remind her of our former connexions, and of those times which were so recent in my memory? Should I suffer her to conclude that I had forgot them, or that I no longer regarded them? Think what a punishment it must be to treat the object nearest your heart as a stranger? What infamy, on the other hand, to abuse hospitality so far as to entertain her with discourse to which she could not now listen with decency? Under these various perplexities I could not keep my countenance; my colour went and came; I durst not speak, nor lift up mine eyes, nor make the least motion; and I believe that I should have remained in this uneasy situation till her husband's return, if she had not relieved me. For her part, this *tête-à-tête* did not seem to embarrass her in the least. She preserved the same manner and deportment as before, and continued to talk to me with the same freedom; she only, as I imagined, endeavoured to affect more ease and gaiety, tempered with a look, not timid or tender, but

soft and affectionate, as if she meant to encourage me to recover my spirits, and lay aside a reserve which she could not but perceive.

She talked to me of my long voyages ; she inquired into particulars ; into those especially which related to the dangers I had escaped, and the hardships I had endured : for she was sensible, she said, that she was bound in friendship to make me some reparation. “ Ah, Eloisa ! (said I, in a plaintive accent) I have enjoyed your company but for a moment ; would you send me back to the Indies already ? ” — “ No (she answered with a smile) but I would go thither in my turn.”

I told her that I had given you a detail of my voyage, of which I had brought her a copy for her perusal. She then inquired after you with great eagerness. I gave her an account of you which I could not do without recounting the troubles I had undergone, and the uneasiness I had occasioned you. She was affected ; she began to enter into her own justification in a more serious tone, and to convince me that it was her duty to act as she had done. M. Wolmar joined us in the middle of her discourse, and what confounded me was, that she proceeded in the same manner as if he had not been there. He could not forbear smiling, on discovering my astonishment. After she concluded, “ You see (said he) an instance of the sincerity which reigns in this house.

If you mean to be virtuous, learn to copy it : it is the only request I have to make, and the only lesson I would teach you. The first step towards vice is to make a mystery of actions innocent in themselves, and whoever is fond of disguise, will sooner or later have reason to conceal himself.— One moral precept may supply the place of all the rest, which is this: neither to say or do any thing which you would not have all the world see and hear.—For my part, I have always esteemed that Roman above all other men, who wished that his house was built in such a manner, that the world might see all his transactions.

“ I have two proposals (he continued) to make to you. Choose freely that which you like best, but accept either the one or the other.” Then taking his wife’s hand and mine, and closing them together, he said, “ Our friendship commences from this moment; this forms the dear connexion, and may it be indissoluble. Embrace her as your sister and your friend; treat her as such constantly; the more familiar you are with her, the better I shall esteem you: but either behave, when alone, as if I was present; or in my presence as if I was absent. This is all I desire. If you prefer the latter, you may choose it without any inconvenience; for as I reserve to myself the right of intimating to you any thing which displeases me, so long as I am silent in that respect you may be certain that I am not offended.”

I should have been greatly embarrassed by this discourse two hours before, but M. Wolmar began to gain such an ascendancy over me, that his authority already grew somewhat familiar to me. — We all three entered once more into indifferent conversation, and every time I spoke to Eloisa, I did not fail to address her by the style of *Madam*. “Tell me sincerely (said her husband, at last, interrupting me) in your *tête-à-tête* party just now, did you call her *Madam*?” — “No (answered I, somewhat disconcerted)” — “Such politeness (he replied) is nothing but the mask of vice; where virtue maintains its empire, it is unnecessary; and I discard it. Call my wife *Eloisa* in my presence, or *Madam* when you are alone; it is indifferent to me.” I began to know what kind of a man I had to deal with, and I resolved always to keep my mind in such a state as to bear his examination.

My body drooping with fatigue, stood in need of refreshment, and my spirits required rest; I found both one and the other at table. After so many years absence and vexation, after such tedious voyages, I said to myself, in a kind of rapture, I am in company with Eloisa, I see her, I talk with her; I sit at a table with her; she views me without inquietude, and entertains me without apprehensions. Nothing interrupts our mutual satisfaction. Gentle and precious innocence, I never be-

fore relished thy charms, and to-day, for the first time, my existence ceases to be painful!

At night, when I retired to rest, I passed by their chamber; I saw them go in together; I proceeded to my own in a melancholy mood, and this moment was the least agreeable to me of any I that day experienced.

Such, my lord, were the occurrences of this first interview, so passionately wished for, and so dreadfully apprehended. I have endeavoured to collect myself since I have been alone; I have compelled myself to self examination; but as I am not yet recovered from the agitation of the preceding day, it is impossible for me to judge of the true state of my mind. All that I know for certain, is, that if the nature of my affection for her is not changed, at least the mode of it is altered, for I am always anxious to have a third person between us, and I now dread being alone with her as much as I longed for it formerly.

I intend to go to Lausanne in two or three days, for as yet I have but half seen Eloisa, not having seen her cousin; that dear and amiable friend, to whom I am so much indebted, and who will always share my friendship, my services, my gratitude, and all the affections of my soul. On my return I will take the first opportunity to give you a further account. I have need of your advice, and shall keep a strict eye over my con-

Just. I know my duty, and will discharge it. However agreeable it may be to fix my residence in this house, I am determined, nay I have sworn, that when I grow too fond of my abode, I will quit it immediately.

LETTER CXXVI.

MRS. WOLMAR TO MRS. ORBE.

If you had been kind enough to have staid with us as long as we desired, you would have had the pleasure of embracing your friend before your departure. He came hither the day before yesterday, and wanted to visit you to-day; but the fatigue of his journey confines him to his room, and this morning he was let blood. Besides, I was fully determined, in order to punish you, not to let him go so soon; and unless you will come hither, I assure you that it will be a long time before you shall see him. You know it would be very improper to let him see the *inseparables* asunder.

In truth, Clara, I cannot tell what idle apprehensions bewitched my mind with respect to his coming hither, and I am ashamed to have opposed it with such obstinacy. As much as I dreaded the sight of him, I should now be sorry not to have seen him, for his presence has banished those

fears which yet disturbed me, and which, by fixing my attention constantly on him, might at length have given me just cause of uneasiness. I am so far from being apprehensive of the affection I feel for him, that I believe I should mistrust myself more was he less dear to me; but I love him as tenderly as ever, though my love is of a different nature. It is by comparing my present sensations with those which his presence formerly occasioned, that I derive my security, and the difference of such opposite sentiments is perceived in proportion to their vivacity.

. With regard to him, though I knew him at the first glance, he nevertheless appeared to be greatly altered; and what I should formerly have thought impossible, he seems, in many respects, to be changed for the better. On the first day, he discovered many symptoms of perplexity, and it was with great difficulty that I concealed mine from him. But it was not long before he recovered that free deportment and openness of manner which becomes his character. I had always seen him timid and bashful; the fear of offending me, and perhaps the secret shame of acting a part unbecoming a man of honour, gave him an air of meanness and servility before me, which you have more than once very justly ridiculed. Instead of the submission of a slave, at present he has the respectful behaviour of a friend, who knows how to honour the object of his esteem. He now com-

municates his sentiments with freedom and honesty ; he is not afraid lest his severe maxims of virtue should clash with his interest ; he is not apprehensive of injuring himself or affecting me, by praising what is commendable in itself, and one may perceive in all he says the confidence of an honest man, who can depend upon himself, and who derives that approbation from his own conscience, which he formerly sought for only in my looks. I find, also, that experience has cured him of that dogmatical and peremptory air which men are apt to contract in their closets ; that he is less forward to judge of mankind, since he has observed them more ; that he is less ready to establish general propositions, since he has seen so many exceptions ; and that, in general, the love of truth has banished the spirit of system : so that he is become less brilliant, but more rational ; and one receives much more information from him, now he does not affect to be so wise.

His figure likewise is altered, but nevertheless not for the worse ; his countenance is more open, his deportment more stately ; he has contracted a kind of martial air in his travels, which becomes him the better, as the lively and spirited gesture he used to express when he was in earnest is now turned into a more grave and sober demeanor. He is a seaman, whose appearance is

cold and phlegmatic, but whose discourse is fiery and impetuous. Though he is turned of thirty, he has the look of a young man, and joins all the spirit of youth to the dignity of manhood. His complexion is entirely altered; he is almost as black as a Negroe, and very much marked with the small-pox. My dear, I must own the truth; I am uneasy whenever I view those marks; and I catch myself looking at them very often in spite of me.

I think I can discover that if I am curious in examining him, he is not less attentive in viewing me. After so long an absence, it is natural to contemplate each other with a kind of curiosity; but if this curiosity may be thought to retain any thing of our former eagerness, yet what difference is there in the manner as well as the motive of it! If our looks do not meet so often, we nevertheless view each other with more freedom. We seem to examine each other alternately by a kind of tacit agreement. Each perceives, as it were, when it is the other's turn, and looks a different way, to give the other an opportunity. Though free from the emotions I formerly felt, yet how is it possible to behold with indifference one who inspired the tenderest passion, and who, to this hour, is the object of the purest affection? Who knows whether self-love does not endeavour to justify past errors? Who knows, whether, though no longer blinded

by passion, we do not both flatter ourselves, by secretly approving our former choice? Be it as it may, I repeat it without a blush, that I feel a more tender affection for him, which will endure to the end of my life. I am so far from reproaching myself for harbouring these sentiments, that I think they deserve applause; I should blush not to perceive them, and consider it as a defect in my character, and the symptom of a bad disposition. With respect to him, I dare believe, that next to virtue he loves me beyond any thing in the world. I perceive that he thinks himself honoured by my esteem; I in my turn will regard him in the same light, and will merit its continuance. Yes! if you saw with what tenderness he caresses my children; if you knew what pleasure he takes in talking of you, you would find, Clara, that I am still dear to him.

What increases my confidence in the opinion we both entertain of him, is that M. Wolmar joins with us, and, since he has seen him, believes, from his own observations, all that we have reported to his advantage. He has talked of him much these two evenings past, congratulating himself on account of the measures he has taken, and rallying me for my opposition. “No (said he, yesterday), we will not suffer so worthy a man to mistrust himself; we will teach him to have more confidence in his own virtue, and,

perhaps, we may one day or other reap the fruits of our present endeavours with more advantage than you imagine. For the present, I must tell you that I am pleased with his character, and that I esteem him particularly for one circumstance, which he little suspects, that is, the reserve with which he behaves towards me. The less friendship he expresses for me, the more he makes me his friend; I cannot tell you how much I dreaded lest he should load me with caresses. This was the first trial I prepared for him: there is yet another by which I intend to prove him: and after that I shall cease all further examination."

—"As to the circumstance you mentioned (said I) it only proves the frankness of his disposition; for he would never resolve to put on a pliant and submissive air before my father, though it was so much his interest, and I so often entreated him to do it. I saw with concern that his behaviour deprived him of the only resource, and yet could not dislike him for not being able to play the hypocrite on any occasion."—"The case is very different (replied my husband): there is a natural antipathy between your father and him, founded on the opposition of their sentiments. With regard to myself, who have no symptoms or prejudices, I am certain that he can have no natural aversion to me. No one can hate me; a man without passions cannot inspire any one with an aversion towards him: but I deprived him of the

object of his wishes, which he will not readily forgive. He will, however, conceive the stronger affection for me, when he is perfectly convinced that the injury I have done him does not prevent me from looking upon him with an eye of kindness. If he cared me now, he would be a hypocrite; if he never cares me, he will be a monster."

Such, my dear Clara, is the situation we are in, and I begin to think that Heaven will bless the integrity of our hearts, and the kind intentions of my husband. But I am too kind to you in entering into all these details; you do not deserve that I should take such pleasure in conversing with you; but I am determined to tell you no more, and if you desire further information, you must come hither to receive it.

P. S.—I must acquaint you nevertheless with what has passed with respect to the subject of this letter. You know with what indulgence M. Wolmar received the late confession which our friend's unexpected return obliged me to make. You saw with what tenderness he endeavoured to dry up my tears, and dispel my shame. Whether, as you reasonably conjectured, I told him nothing new, or whether he was really affected by a proceeding which nothing but sincere repentance could dictate, he has not only continued

to live with me as before, but he even seems to have increased his attention, his confidence, and esteem, as if he meant, by his kindness, to repay the confusion which my confession cost me. My dear Clara, you know my heart; judge then what an impression such a conduct must make!

As soon as I found that he was determined to let our old friend come hither, I resolved, on my part, to take the best precautions I could contrive against myself: which was, to choose my husband himself for my confidant; to hold no particular conversations which I did not communicate to him, and to write no letter which I did not show to him. I even made it a part of my duty to write every letter as if it was not intended for his inspection, and afterwards to show it to him. You will find an article in this which was penned on this principle; if while I was writing I could not forbear thinking that he might read it, yet my conscience bears witness that I did not alter a single word on that account; but when I showed him my letter, he bantered me, and had not the civility to read it.

I confess that I was somewhat piqued at his refusal; as if he had doubted my honour. My emotion did not escape his notice, and this most open and generous man soon removed my apprehension. "Confess (said he) that you have said less concerning me than usual in that letter." I owned; was it decent to say much of him, when

I intended to show him what I had written?—
“ Well (he replied, with a smile) I had rather that you would talk of me more, and not know what you say of me.” Afterwards, he continued, in a more serious tone: “ Marriage (said he) is too grave and solemn a state to admit of that free communication which tender friendship allows. The latter connexion often happily contributes to moderate the rigour of the former; and it may be reasonable in some cases for a virtuous and discreet woman to seek for that comfort, intelligence, and advice from a faithful confidant, which it might not be proper for her to desire of her husband. Though nothing passes between you but what you would choose to communicate, yet take care not to make it a duty, lest that duty should become a restraint upon you, and your correspondence grow less agreeable, by being more diffusive. Believe me, the open hearted sincerity of friendship is restrained by the presence of a witness, whoever it be. There are a thousand secrets of which three friends ought to participate; but which cannot be communicated but between two. You may impart the same things to your friend and to your husband, but you do not relate them in the same manner; and if you will confound these distinctions, the consequence will be, that your letters will be addressed more to me than her, and that you will not be free

from restraint either with one or the other. It is as much for my own interest as for your's that I urge these reasons. Do not you perceive that you are already, with good reason, apprehensive of the indelicacy of praising me to my face? Why will you deprive yourself of the pleasure of acquainting your friend how tenderly you love your husband, and me of the satisfaction of supposing, that, in your most private intercourse; you take delight in speaking well of me! Eloisa! Eloisa! (he added, pressing my hand, and looking at me with tenderness) why will you demean yourself, by taking precautions so unworthy of you, and will you never learn to make a true estimate of your own worth?"

My dear friend, it is impossible to tell you how this incomparable man behaves to me: I no longer blush in his presence. Spite of my frailty, he lifts me above myself, and, by dint of reposing confidence in me, teaches me to deserve it.

LETTER CXXVII.

THE ANSWER.

IMPOSSIBLE! our traveller returned, and have I not yet seen him at my feet, loaded with the spoils of America? But it is not him, I assure you, whom I accuse of this delay; for I am sensible it

is as grievous to him as to me : but I find that he has not so thoroughly forgotten his former state of fervility as you pretend, and I complain less of his neglect, than of your tyranny. It is very extraordinary in you, indeed, to desire such a prude as I am to make the first advances, and run to salute a swarthy pock-fretten face, which has passed four times under the line. But you make me smile to see you in such haste to scold, for fear I should begin first. I should be glad to know what pretence you have to make such an attempt ? Quarrelling is my talent. I take pleasure in it, I acquit myself to a miracle, and it becomes me ; but you, my dear cousin, are a mere novice at this work. If you did but know how graceful you appear in the act of confession, how lovely you look with a supplicating eye, and an air of confusion, instead of scolding, you would spend your days in asking pardon, were it only out of coquetry.

For the present, you must ask my pardon in every respect. A fine project truly, to choose a husband for a confidant, and a more obliging precaution indeed for a friendship so sacred as our's ! Thou faithless friend, and pusillanimous woman ! on whom can you depend, if you mistrust yourself and me ? Can you, without offence to both, considering the sacred tie under which you live, suspect your own inclinations and my indulgence. I am amazed that the very idea of admitting a

third person into the tittle-tattle secrets of two women did not disgust you? As for my part, I love to prattle with you at my ease, but if I thought that the eye of man ever pryed into my letters, I should no longer have any pleasure in corresponding with you; such a reserve would insensibly introduce a coldness between us, and we should have no more regard for each other than two indifferent women. To what inconveniences your silly distrust would have exposed us, if your husband had not been wiser than you.

He acted very discreetly in not reading your letter. Perhaps he would have been less satisfied with it than you imagine, and less than I am myself, who am better capable of judging of your present condition, by the state in which I have seen you formerly. All those contemplative sages who have passed their lives in the study of the human heart, are less acquainted with the real symptoms of love than the most shallow woman, if she has any sensibility. M. Wolmar would immediately have observed, that our friend was the subject of your whole letter, and he would not have seen the postscript, in which you do not once mention him. If you had written this postscript ten years ago, my dear, I cannot tell how you would have managed, but your friend would certainly have been crowded into some corner, especially as there was no husband to overlook it.

M. Wolmar would have observed further with what attention you examined his guest, and the pleasure you take in describing his person; but he might devour Plato and Aristotle, before he would know that we *look at* a lover, but do not *examine* him. All examination requires a degree of indifference, which we never feel when we behold the object of our passion.

In short, he would imagine that all the alterations you remark might have escaped another, and I, on the contrary, was afraid of finding that they had escaped you. However your guest may be altered from what he was, he would appear the same, if your affections were not altered. You turn away your eyes whenever he looks at you; this is a very good symptom. You *turn them away*, cousin? You do not now *cast them down*? Surely you have not mistaken one word for another. Do you think that our philosopher would have perceived this distinction?

There is another circumstance very likely to disturb a husband; it is a kind of tenderness and affection which still remains in your style, when you speak of the object who was once so dear to you. One who reads your letters, or hears you speak, ought to be well acquainted with you, not to be mistaken with regard to your sentiments; he ought to know that it is only a friend of whom you are speaking, or that you speak in the same manner of all your friends; but as to that, it is

the natural effect of your disposition, with which your husband is too well acquainted to be alarmed. How is it possible but that, in a mind of such tenderness, pure friendship will bear some resemblance to love? Pray observe, my dear cousin, that all I say to you on this head ought to inspire you with fresh courage: your conduct is discreet, and that is a great deal; I used to trust only to your virtue, but I begin now to rely on your reason; I consider your cure at present, though not perfect, yet as easy to be accomplished, and you have now made a sufficient progress, to render you inexcusable, if you do not complete it.

Before I came to your postscript, I remarked the passage which you had the sincerity not to suppress or alter, though conscious that it would be open to your husband's inspection. I am certain, that if he had read it, it would, if possible, have doubled his esteem for you; nevertheless it would have given him no great pleasure. Upon the whole, your letter was very well calculated to make him place an entire confidence in your conduct, but at the same time it tended to give him uneasiness with respect to your inclinations. I own, those marks of the small-pox, which you view so much, give me some apprehensions; love never yet contrived a more dangerous disguise.—I know that this would be of no consequence to any other; but always remember, Eloisa, that

she who was not to be seduced by the youth and fine figure of her lover, was lost when she reflected on the sufferings he had endured for her.— Providence, no doubt, intended that he should retain the marks of that distemper, to exercise your virtue, and that you should be freed from them, in order to put his to the proof.

I come now to the principal subject of your letter; you know that on the receipt of our friend's, I flew to you immediately; it was a matter of importance. But at present, if you knew in what difficulties that short absence has involved me, and how many things I have to do at once, you would be sensible how impossible it is for me to leave my house again, without exposing myself to fresh inconveniences, and putting myself under a necessity of passing the winter here again, which is neither for your interest or mine. Is it not better to deprive ourselves of the pleasures of a hasty interview of two or three days, that we may be together for six months? I imagine, likewise, that it would not be improper for me to have a little particular and private conversation with our philosopher; partly to sound his inclinations and confirm his mind; partly to give him some useful advice with regard to the conduct he should observe towards your husband, and even towards you; for I do not suppose that you can talk to him with freedom on that subject, and I can perceive, even from your letter, that he has need of

counsel. We have been so long used to govern him, that we are in conscience responsible for his behaviour; and till he has regained the free use of his reason, we must supply the deficiency. For my own part, it is a charge I shall always undertake with pleasure; for he has paid such deference to my advice as I shall never forget; and since my husband is no more, there is not a man in the world whom I esteem and love so much as himself. I have likewise reserved for him the pleasure of doing me some little services here. I have a great many papers in confusion, which he will help me to regulate, and I have some troublesome affairs in hand, in which I shall have occasion for his diligence and understanding. As to the rest, I do not propose to detain him above five or six days at most, and perhaps I may send him to you the next day. For I have too much vanity to wait till he is seized with impatience to return, and I have too much discernment to be deceived in that case.

Do not fail, therefore, as soon as he is recovered, to send him to me; that is, to let him come, or I shall give over all raillery. You know very well, that if I laugh whilst I cry, and yet am not the less in affliction, so I laugh likewise at the same time that I scold, and yet am not the less in a passion. If you are discreet, and do things with a good grace, I promise you that I will send him back to you with a pretty little present, which

will give you pleasure, and a great deal of pleasure; but if you suffer me to languish with impatience, I assure you that you shall have nothing.

P. S.—Apropos; tell me, does our seaman smoke? Does he swear? Does he drink brandy? Does he wear a great cutlass? Has he the look of a Buccaneer? Oh! how I long to see what sort of an air a man has who comes from the Antipodes!

LETTER CXXVIII.

CLARA TO ELOISA.

HERR! take back your slave, my dear cousin.—He has been mine for these eight days past, and he bears his chains with so good a grace, that he seems formed for captivity. Return me thanks that I did not keep him still eight days longer; for, without offence to you, if I had kept him till he began to grow tired of me, I should not have sent him back so soon. I therefore detained him without any scruple; but I was so scrupulous, however, that I durst not let him lodge in my house. I have sometimes perceived in myself that haughtiness of soul, which disdains servile ceremonies, and which is so consistent with virtue. In this instance, however, I have been more reserved

than usual, without knowing why : and all that I know for certain is, that I am more disposed to censure than to applaud my reserve.

But can you guess what induced our friend to stay here so patiently ? First, he had the pleasure of my company, and I presume that circumstance alone was sufficient to make him patient. Then he saved me a great deal of confusion, and was of service to me in my business ; a friend is never tired of such offices. A third reason, which you have probably conjectured, though you pretend not to know it, is, that he talked to me about you ; and if we subtract the time employed in this conversation from the whole time which he has passed here, you will find that there is very little remaining to be placed to my account. But what an odd whim to leave you, in order to have the pleasure of talking of you ! Not so odd as may be imagined. He is under constraint in your company ; he must be continually upon his guard ; the least indiscretion would become a crime, and in those dangerous moments, minds endued with sentiments of honour never fail to recollect their duty ; but when we are remote from the object of our affections, we may indulge ourselves with feasting our imaginations. If we stifle an idea when it becomes criminal, why should we reproach ourselves for having entertained it when it was not so ?—Can the pleasing recollection of innocent pleasures ever be a crime ? This,

I imagine, is a way of reasoning, which you will not acquiesce in, but which, nevertheless, may be admitted. He began, as I may say, to run over the whole course of his former affections. The days of his youth passed over a second time in our conversation. He renewed all his confidence in me; he re-called the happy time, in which he was permitted to love you; he painted to my imagination all the charms of an innocent passion—Without doubt he embellished them!

He said little of his present condition with regard to you, and what he mentioned rather denoted respect and admiration, than love; so that I have the pleasure to think that he will return, much more confident as to the nature of his affections than when he came hither. Not but that, when you are the subject, one may perceive at the bottom of that susceptible mind a certain tenderness, which friendship alone, though not less affecting, still expresses in a different manner; but I have long observed, that it is impossible to see you, or to think of you, with indifference; and if to that general affection which the sight of you inspires, we add the more tender impression which an indelible recollection must have left upon his mind, we shall find that it is difficult, and almost impossible, that, with the most rigid virtue, he should be otherwise than he is. I have fully interrogated him, carefully observed him, and watched him narrowly; I have examined him

with the utmost attention. I cannot read his inmost thoughts, nor do I believe them more intelligible to himself: but I can answer, at least, that he is struck with a sense of his duty and of yours, and that the idea of Eloisa abandoned and contemptible, would be more horrid than his own annihilation. My dear cousin, I have but one piece of advice to give you, and I desire you to attend to it—avoid any detail concerning what is passed, and I will take upon me to answer for the future.

With regard to the restitution which you mentioned, you must think no more of it. After having exhausted all the reasons I could suggest, I entreated him, pressed him, conjured him, but in vain. I pouted, I even kissed him, I took hold of both his hands, and would have fallen on my knees to him, if he would have suffered me; but he would not so much as hear me. He carried the obstinacy of his humour so far, as to swear that he would sooner consent never to see you again, than part with your picture. At last, in a fit of passion, he made me feel it. It was next his heart. “There (said he, with a sigh that almost stopped his breath), there is the picture, the only comfort I have left, and of which nevertheless you would deprive me: be assured that it shall never be torn from me, but at the expence of my life.” Believe me, Eloisa, we had better be discreet, and suffer him to keep the picture.

After all, where is the importance? His obstinacy will be his punishment.

After he had thoroughly unburdened and eased his mind, he appeared so composed, that I ventured to talk to him about his situation. I found that neither time nor reason had made any alteration in his system, and that he confined his whole ambition to the passing his life in the service of Lord B——. I could not but approve such honourable intentions, so consistent with his character, and so becoming that gratitude which is due to such unexhausted kindness. He told me that you were of the same opinion; but that M. Wolmar was silent. A sudden thought strikes me. From your husband's singular conduct, and other symptoms, I suspect that he has some secret design upon our friend, which he does not disclose. Let us leave him to himself, and trust to his discretion. The manner in which he behaves sufficiently proves, that, if my conjecture is right, he meditates nothing but what will be for the advantage of the person about whom he has taken such uncommon pains.

You gave a very just description of his figure and of his manners, which proves that you have observed him more attentively than I should have imagined. But do not you find that his continued anxieties have rendered his countenance more expressive than it used to be? Notwithstanding the account you gave me, I was afraid

to find him tinged with that affected politeness, those apish manners, which people seldom fail to contract at Paris, and which, in the round of trifles which employ an indolent day, are vainly displayed under different modes. Whether it be that some minds are not susceptible of this polish, or whether the sea air entirely effaced it, I could not discover in him the least marks of affectation; and all the zeal he expressed for me seemed to flow entirely from the dictates of his heart. He talked to me about my poor husband; but instead of comforting me, he chose to join with me in bewailing him, and never once attempted to make any fine speeches on the subject. He caressed my daughter, but instead of admiring her as I do, he reproached me with her failings, and, like you, complained that I spoiled her; he entered into my concerns with great zeal, and was seldom of my opinion in any respect. Moreover, the wind might have blown my eyes out, before he would have thought of drawing a curtain; I might have been fatigued to death in going from one room to another, before he would have had gallantry enough to have stretched out his hand, covered with the skirt of his coat, to support me: my fan lay upon the ground yesterday for more than a second, and he did not fly from the bottom of the room, as if he was going to snatch it out of the fire. In the morning, before he came to visit me, he never

once sent to inquire how I did. When we are walking together, he does not affect to have his hat nailed upon his head, to show that he knows the pink of the mode*. At table, I frequently asked him for his snuff-box, which he always gave me in his hand, and never presented it upon a plate, like a *fine gentleman*; or rather like a footman. He did not fail to drink my health twice at least at dinner, and I will lay a wager, that if he stays with us this winter, we shall see him sit round the fire with us, and warm himself like an old cit. You laugh, cousin; but show me one of our gallants newly arrived from Paris, who preserves the same manly deportment.—— As to the rest, I think you must allow that our philosopher is altered for the worse in one respect, which is, that he takes rather more notice of people who speak to him, which he cannot do but to your prejudice; nevertheless, I hope that I shall be able to reconcile him to Madam Belon.

* At Paris, they pique themselves on rendering society easy and commodious; and this ease is made to consist of a great number of rules, equally important with the above. In good company, every thing is regulated according to form and order. All these ceremonies are in and out of fashion as quick as lightning. The science of polite life consists in being always upon the watch, to seize them as they fly, to affect them, and show that we are acquainted with the mode of the day.

For my part, I think him altered for the better, because he is more serious than ever. My dear, take great care of him till my arrival. He is just the man I could wish to have the pleasure of plaguing all day long.

Admire my discretion ; I have taken no notice yet of the present I sent you, and which is an earnest of another to come. But you have received it before you opened my letter, and you know how much, and with what reason I idolize it ; you, whose avarice is so anxious about this present, you must acknowledge that I have performed more than I promised. Ah ! the dear little creature ! While you are reading this, she is already in your arms ; she is happier than her mother ; but in two months time I shall be happier than she, for I shall be more sensible of my felicity. Alas ! dear cousin, do not you possess me wholly already ? Where you and my daughter are, what part of me is wanting ? There she is, the dear little infant ; take her as your own ; I give her up ; I put her into your hands ; I consign all maternal authority over to you ; correct my failings ; take that charge upon yourself, of which I acquitted myself so little to your liking : henceforward, be as a mother to her, who is one day to be your daughter-in-law ; and to render her dearer to me still, make another Eloisa of her if possible. She is like you in the face already ; as to her temper, I guess that she will be grave

and thoughtful ; when you have corrected those little caprices which I have been accused of encouraging, you will find that my daughter will give herself the airs of my cousin ; but she will be happier than Eloisa in having less tears to shed, and less struggles to encounter. Do you know that she cannot be any longer without her little M——, and that it is partly for that reason I send her back ? I had a conversation with her yesterday, which threw our friend into an immoderate fit of laughing. First, she leaves me without the least regret ; I, who am her humble servant all day long, and can deny her nothing she asks for ; and you, of whom she is afraid, and who answer her *No* twenty times a day ; you, by way of excellence, are her little mamma, whom she visits with pleasure, and whose denials she likes better than all my fine presents : when I told her that I was going to send her to you, she was transported, as you may imagine ; but to perplex her, I told her that you in return was to send me little M—— in her stead, and that was not agreeable to her. She was quite at a nonplus, and asked what I would do with him. I told her that I would take him to myself : she began to pout. “ Harriet (said I) won’t you give up your little M—— to me ? ” — “ No (said she, somewhat coldly). “ No ? But if I won’t give him up neither, who shall settle it between us ? ” — “ Mam-

ma, my little mamma shall settle it.”—“Then I shall have the preference, for you know she will do whatever I desire.”—“Oh, but mamma will do nothing but what is right!”—“And do you think I should desire what’s wrong?” The sly little jade began to smile. “But after all (I continued) for what reason should she refuse to give me little M——?”—“Because he is not fit for you.”—“And why is he not fit for me? (Another arch smile, as full of meaning as the former.) Tell me honestly, is it not because you think me too old for him?”—“No, mamma, but he is too young for you.” This from a child but seven years old. . . .

I amused myself with piquing her still further: “My dear Harriet (said I, assuming a serious air) I assure you that he is not fit for you neither.” “Why so?” (she cried, as if she had been suddenly alarmed.)—“Because he is too giddy for you.”—“Oh, mamma, is that all? I will make him wise.”—“But if unfortunately he should make you foolish.”—“Then, mamma, I should be like you.”—“Like me, impertinence?”—“Yes, mamma, you are saying all day that you are foolishly fond of me.”—“Well, then, I will be foolishly fond of him, that is all.”

I know you don’t approve of this pretty prattle, and that you will soon know how to check it. Neither will I justify it, though I own it delights me; but I only mention it, to convince

you that my daughter is already in love with her little M——, and that if he is two years younger, she is not unworthy of that authority which she may claim by right of seniority. I perceive likewise, by opposing your example and my own to that of your poor mother's, that where the woman governs the house is not the worse managed. Farewell, my dear friend ; farewell, my constant companion ! The time is approaching, and the vintage shall not be gathered without me.

LETTER CXXIX.

TO LORD B——.

WHAT pleasures, too late enjoyed (alas ! enjoyed too late) have I tasted these three weeks past ! How delightful to pass one day in the bosom of calm friendship, secure from the tempests of impetuous passion ! What a pleasing and affecting scene, my lord, is a plain and well-regulated family, where order, peace, and innocence reign throughout ; where, without pomp or retinue, every thing is assembled which can contribute to the real felicity of mankind ! The country, the retirement, the season, the vast body of water which opens to my view, the wild prospect of the mountains, every thing conspires to recall to my mind the delightful island of Tinian. I flatter

myself that the earnest prayers which I there so often repeated are now accomplished. I live here agreeably to my taste, and enjoy society suitable to my liking. I only want the company of two persons to complete my happiness, and I hope to see them here soon.

In the mean time, till you and Mrs. Orbe come to perfect those charming and innocent pleasures which I begin to relish here, I will endeavour, by way of detail, to give you an idea of that domestic economy which proclaims the happiness of the master and mistress, and communicates their felicity to every one under their roof. I hope that my reflections may one day be of use to you, with respect to the project you have in view, and this hope encourages me to pursue them.

I need not give you a description of Clarens house. You know it. You can tell how delightful it is; what interesting recollections it presents to my mind; you can judge how dear it must be to me, both on account of the present scenes it exhibits, and of those which it recalls to my mind. Mrs. Wolmar, with good reason, prefers this abode to that of Etange, a superb and magnificent castle, but old, inconvenient, and gloomy, its situation being far inferior to the country round Clarens.

Since Mr. and Mrs. Wolmar have fixed their residence here, they have converted to use every

thing which served only for ornament: it is no longer a house for show, but for convenience. They have shut up a long range of rooms, to alter the inconvenient situation of the doors; they have cut off others that were over-sized, that the apartments might be better distributed. Instead of rich and antique furniture, they have substituted what is neat and convenient. Every thing here is pleasant and agreeable; every thing breathes an air of plenty and propriety, without any appearance of pomp and luxury. There is not a single room, in which you do not immediately recollect that you are in the country, but in which, nevertheless, you will find all the conveniences you meet with in town. The same alterations are observable without doors. The yard has been enlarged at the expence of the coach-houses. Instead of an old tattered billiard-table, they have made a fine press, and the spot which used to be filled with screaming peacocks, which they have parted with, is converted into a dairy. The kitchen-garden was too small for the kitchen; they have made another out of a flower-garden, but so convenient, and so well laid out, that the spot, thus transformed, looks more agreeable to the eye than before. Instead of the mournful yews which covered the wall, they have planted good fruit-trees. In the room of the useless Indian *black-berry*, fine young mul-

berry-trees now begin to shade the yard, and they have planted two rows of walnut-trees quite to the road, in the place of some old linden-trees which bordered the avenue. They have throughout substituted the useful in the room of the agreeable, and yet the agreeable has gained by the alteration. For my own part, at least, I think that the noises in the yard, such as the crowing of the cocks, the lowing of the cattle, the harness of the carts, the rural repasts, the return of the husbandmen, and all the train of rustic economy, give the house a more lively, animated, and gay appearance, than it had in its former state of mournful dignity.

Their estate is not out upon lease, but they are their own farmers, and the cultivation of it employs a great deal of their time, and makes a great part both of their pleasure and profit. The manor of Etange is nothing but meadow, pasture, and wood : but the produce of Clarens consists of vineyards, which are considerable objects, and in which the difference of culture produces more sensible effects than in corn ; which is a further reason why, in point of economy, they should prefer the latter as a place of residence. Nevertheless, they generally go to Etange every year at harvest-time, and M. Wolmar visits it frequently. It is a maxim with them, to cultivate their lands to the utmost they will produce, not for the sake of extraordinary profit, but as the

means of employing more hands. M. Wolmar maintains, that the produce of the earth is in proportion to the number of hands employed; the better it is tilled, the more it yields; and the surplus of its produce furnishes the means of cultivating it still further; the more it is stocked with men and cattle, the greater abundance it yields for their support. No one can tell, says he, where this continual and reciprocal increase of produce and of labour may end. On the contrary, land neglected loses its fertility, the fewer men a country produces, the less provision it furnishes, the scarcity of inhabitants is the reason why it is insufficient to maintain the few it has, and in every country which tends to depopulation, the people will sooner or later die of famine.

Therefore, having a great deal of land, which they cultivate with the utmost industry, they require, besides the servants in the yard, a great number of day-labourers, which procures them the pleasure of maintaining a great number of people without any inconvenience to themselves. In the choice of their labourers, they always prefer their neighbours, and those of the same place, to strangers and foreigners. Though by this means they may sometimes be losers in not choosing the most robust, yet this loss is soon made up by the affection which this preference inspires

in those whom they choose, by the advantage likewise of having them always about them, and of being able to depend on them at all times, though they keep them in pay but part of the year.

They always make two prices with these labourers. One is a strict payment of right, the current price of the country, which they engage to pay them when they hire them. The other, which is more liberal, is a payment of generosity; it is bestowed only as they are found to deserve it, and it seldom happens that they do not earn the surplus; for M. Wolmar is just and strict, and never suffers institutions of grace and favour to degenerate into custom and abuse. Over these labourers there are overseers, who watch and encourage them. These overseers work along with the rest; and are interested in their labour, by a little augmentation which is made to their wages from every advantage that is reaped from their industry. Besides, M. Wolmar visits them almost every day himself, sometimes often in a day, and his wife loves to take these walks with him. In times of extraordinary business, Eloisa every week bestows some little gratifications to such of the labourers, or other servants, as, in the judgment of their master, have been most industrious for the past week. All these means of promoting emulation, though seemingly expensive, when used with

justice and discretion, insensibly make people laborious and diligent; and in the end bring in more than is disbursed; but, as they turn to no profit, but by time and perseverance, few people know any thing of them, or are willing to make use of them.

But the most effectual method of all, which is peculiar to Mrs. Wolmar, and which they who are bent on economy seldom think of, is that of gaining the hearts of those good people, by making them the objects of her affection. She does not think it sufficient to reward their industry, by giving them money, but she thinks herself bound to do further services to those who have contributed to hers. Labourers, domestics, all who serve her, if it be but for a day, become her children; she takes part in their pleasures, their cares, and their fortune; she inquires into their affairs; and makes their interest her own; she engages in a thousand concerns for them, she gives them her advice, she composes their differences, and does not show the affability of her disposition in smooth and fruitless speeches, but in real services, and continual acts of benevolence. They, on their parts, leave every thing, to serve her, on the least motion. They fly when she speaks to them; her look alone animates their zeal; in her presence they are contented; in her absence they talk of her, and are eager to be employed. Her

charms, and her manner of conversing, do a great deal, but her gentleness and her virtues more. Ah! my lord, what a powerful and adorable empire is that of benevolent beauty!

With respect to their personal attendants, they have within doors eight servants, three women and five men, without reckoning the Baron's valet-de-chambre, or the servants in the out-houses.—It seldom happens that people who have but few servants are ill served; but from the uncommon zeal of these servants, one would conclude that each thought himself charged with the business of the other seven, and from the harmony among them, one would imagine that the whole business was done by one man. You never see them in the out-houses idle and unemployed, or playing in the court-yard, but always about some useful employment; they assist in the yard, in the cellar, and in the kitchen. The gardener has nobody under him but them, and what is most agreeable, you see them do all this cheerfully, and with pleasure.

They take them young, in order to form them to their minds. They do not follow the maxim here, which prevails at Paris and London, of choosing domestics ready formed, that is to say, complete rascals, runners of quality, who, in every family they go through, catch the failings both of master and man, and make a trade of serving every body, without being attached to any

one. There can be neither honesty, fidelity, or zeal, among such fellows, and this collection of rabble serves to ruin the masters, and corrupt the children, in all wealthy families. Here, the choice of domestics is considered as an article of importance. They do not regard them merely as mercenaries, from whom they only require a stipulated service, but as members of a family, which, should they be ill chosen, might be ruined by that means. The first thing they require of them is to be honest, the next is to love their master, and the third to serve him to his liking; but where a master is reasonable, and a servant intelligent, the third is the consequence of the two first. Therefore they do not take them from town, but from the country. This is the first place they live in, and it will assuredly be the last if they are good for any thing. They take them out of some numerous family overstocked with children, whose parents come to offer them of their own accord. They choose them young, well made, healthy, and of a pleasant countenance. M. Wolmar interrogates and examines them, and then presents them to his wife. If they prove agreeable to both, they are received at first upon trial, afterwards they are admitted among the number of servants, or more properly the children of the family, and they employ some days in teaching them their duty with a great deal of care and patience. The service is so sim-

ple, so equal and uniform, the master and mistress are so little subject to whims and caprice, and the servants so soon conceive an affection for them, that their business is soon learnt. Their condition is agreeable; they find conveniences which they had not at home; but they are not suffered to be enervated by idleness, the parent of vice. They do not allow them to become gentlemen, and to grow proud in their service. They continue to work as they did with their own family; in fact, they do but change their father and mother, and get more wealthy parents. They do not, therefore, hold their old rustic employments in contempt. Whenever they leave this place, there is not one of them who had not rather turn peasant, than take any other employment. In short, I never saw a family, where every one acquits himself so well in his service, and thinks so little of the trouble of servitude.

Thus, by training up their servants themselves, in this discreet manner, they guard against the objection which is so very trifling, and so frequently made, viz. "I shall only bring them up for the service of others." Train them properly, one might answer, and they will never serve any one else. If, in bringing them up, you solely regard your own benefit, they have a right to consult their own interest in quitting you; but if you seem to consider their advantage, they will remain constantly attached to you. It is the in-

tion alone which constitutes the obligation, and he who is indirectly benefited by an act of kindness, wherein I meant to serve myself only, owes me no obligation whatever.

As a double preventive against this inconvenience, Mr. and Mrs. Wolmar take another method, which appears to me extremely prudent. At the first establishment of their household, they calculated what number of servants their fortune would allow them to keep, and they found it to amount to fifteen or sixteen; in order to be better served, they made a reduction of half that number; so that, with less retinue, their service is more exactly attended. To be more effectually served still, they have made it the interest of their servants to continue with them a long time. When a domestic first enters into their service, he receives the common wages; but those wages are augmented every year by a twentieth part; so that, at the end of twenty years, they will be more than doubled, and the charge of keeping these servants will be nearly the same, in proportion to the master's circumstances. But there is no need of being a deep algebraist to discover that the expence of this augmentation is more in appearance than reality; that there will be but few to whom double wages will be paid, and that if they were paid to all the servants, yet the benefit of having been well served for twenty years past, would more than compensate the extraordinary

expence. You perceive, my lord, that this is a certain expedient of making servants grow continually more and more careful, and of attaching them to you, by attaching yourself to them. There is not only prudence, but justice, in such a provision. Is it reasonable that a new-comer, who has no affection for you, and who is perhaps an unworthy object, should receive the same salary, at his first entrance into the family, as an old servant, whose zeal and fidelity have been tried in a long course of services, and who, besides, being grown in years, draws near the time when he will be incapable of providing for himself? The latter reason, however, must not be brought into the account, and you may easily imagine that such a benevolent master and mistress do not fail to discharge that duty, which many, who are devoid of charity, fulfil out of ostentation; and you may suppose that they do not abandon those whose infirmities or old age render them incapable of service.

I can give you a very striking instance of their attention to this duty. The Baron d'Etange, being desirous to recompense the long services of his valet-de-chambre, by procuring him an honourable retreat, had the interest to procure for him the L. S. E. E. an easy and lucrative post. Eloisa has just now received a most affecting letter from this old servant, in which he entreats her to get him excused from accepting this em-

ployment, "I am in years (says he) : I have lost all my family; I have no relations but my master and his family; all my hope is to end my days quietly in the house where I have passed the greatest part of them. Often, dear madam, as I have held you in my arms when but an infant, I prayed to Heaven that I might one day hold your little ones in the same manner. My prayers have been heard; do not deny me the happiness of seeing them grow and prosper like you: I, who have been accustomed to a quiet family, where shall I find such another place of rest in my old age? Be so kind to write to the Baron in my behalf. If he is dissatisfied with me, let him turn me off, and give me no employment; but if I have served him faithfully for these forty years past, let him allow me to end my days in his service and yours—he cannot reward me better." It is needless to inquire whether Eloisa wrote to the Baron or not. I perceive that she would be as unwilling to part with this good man, as he would be to leave her. Am I wrong, my lord, when I compare a master and mistress, thus beloved, to good parents, and their servants to obedient children? You find that they consider themselves in this light.

There is not a single instance in this family of a servant's giving warning. It is even very seldom that they are threatened with a dismissal. A menace of this kind alarms them in proportion

as their service is pleasant and agreeable. The best subjects are always the soonest alarmed, and there is never any occasion to come to extremities but with such as are not worth regretting.— They have likewise a rule in this respect. When M. Wolmar says I discharge you, they may then implore Mrs. Wolmar to intercede for them, and through her intercession may be restored; but if she gives them warning, it is irrevocable, and they have no favour to expect. This agreement between them is very well calculated both to moderate the extreme confidence which her gentleness might beget in them, and the violent apprehensions they might conceive from his inflexibility. Such a warning, nevertheless, is excessively dreaded from a just and dispassionate master; for besides that they are not certain of obtaining favour, and that the same person is never pardoned twice, they forfeit the right which they acquire from their long service, by having had warning given, and when they are restored, they begin a new service as it were. This prevents the old servants from growing insolent, and makes them more circumspect, in proportion as they have more to lose.

The three maid-servants are the chambermaid, the governess, and the cook. The latter is a country girl, very proper and well qualified for the place, whom Mrs. Wolmar has instructed in cookery: for in this country, which is as yet in

some measure in a state of simplicity, young ladies learn to do that business themselves, that when they keep house, they may be able to direct their servants; and consequently are less liable to be imposed upon by them. B—— is no longer the chamber-maid; they have sent her back to Etange, where she was born; they have again intrusted her with the care of the castle, and the superintendence of the receipts, which makes her in some degree comptroller of the household.— M. Wolmar entreated his wife to make this regulation; but it was a long time before she could resolve to part with an old servant of her mother's, though she had more than one reason to be displeased with her. But after their last conference, she gave her consent and B—— is gone. The girl is handy and honest, but babbling and indiscreet. I suspect that she has, more than once, betrayed the secrets of her mistress, that M. Wolmar is sensible of it, and to prevent her being guilty of the same indiscretion with respect to a stranger, he has prudently taken this method to avail himself of her good qualities, without running any hazard from her failings. She who is taken in her room, is that Fanny of whom you have often heard me speak with so much pleasure. Notwithstanding Eloisa's prediction, her favours, her father's kindness, and yours, this deserving and discreet woman has not been happy in her connexion. Claude Annet, who endured adver-

sity so bravely, could not support a more prosperous state. When he found himself at ease, he neglected his business, and his affairs being quite embarrassed, he fled the country, leaving his wife with an infant, whom she has since lost. Eloisa having taken her home, instructed her in the business of a chamber-maid, and I was never more agreeably surprised than to find her settled in her employment the first day of my arrival. M. Wolmar pays great regard to her, and they have both intrusted her with the charge of superintending their children, and of having an eye likewise over their governess, who is a simple credulous country lass, but attentive, patient, and tractable ; so that, in short, they have omitted no precaution to prevent the vices of the town from creeping into a family, where the master and mistress are strangers to them, and will not suffer them under their roof.

Though there is but one table among all the servants, yet there is but little communication between the men and women, and this they consider as a point of great importance. M. Wolmar is not of the same opinion with those masters who are indifferent to every thing which does not immediately concern their interests, and who only desire to be well served, without troubling themselves about what their servants do besides. He thinks, on the contrary, that they who regard nothing but their own service cannot be well served.

Too close a connexion between the two sexes frequently occasions mischief. The disorders of most families arise from the rendezvous which are held in the chambermaid's apartment. If there is one whom the steward happens to be fond of, he does not fail to seduce her at the expence of his master. A good understanding among the men or among the women is not alone sufficiently firm to produce any material consequences.— But it is always between the men and the women that those secret monopolies are established, which in the end ruined the most wealthy families.— They pay a particular attention, therefore, to the discretion and modesty of the women, not only from principles of honesty and morality, but from well judged motives of interest. For, whatever some may pretend, no one who does not love his duty can discharge it as he ought; and none ever loved their duty who were devoid of honour.

They do not, to prevent any dangerous intimacy between the two sexes, restrain them by positive rules, which they might be tempted to violate in secret, but without any seeming intention, they establish good customs, which are more powerful than authority itself. They do not forbid any intercourse between them, but it is contrived in such a manner that they have no occasion or inclination to see each other. This is effected by making their business, their habits,

their tastes, and their pleasures, entirely different. To maintain the admirable order which they have established, they are sensible that in a well regulated family there should be as little correspondence as possible between the two sexes. They who would accuse their master of caprice, was he to enforce such a rule by way of injunction, submit, without regret, to a manner of life which is not positively prescribed to them, but which they themselves conceive to be the best and most natural. Eloisa insists that it must be so in fact; she maintains that neither love nor conjugal union is the result of a continual commerce between the sexes. In her opinion, husband and wife were designed to live together, but not to live in the same manner. They ought to act in concert, but not to do the same things. The kind of life, says she, which would delight the one would be insupportable to the other; the inclinations which nature has given them are as different as the occupations she has assigned them: they differ in their amusements as much as in their duties. In a word, each contributes to the common good by different ways, and the proper distribution of their several cares and employments is the strongest tie that cements their union.

For my own part, I confess that my observations are much in favour of this maxim. In fact, is it not the general practice, except among the

French, and those who imitate them, for the men and women to live separately? If they see each other, it is rather by short interviews, and as it were by stealth, as the Spartans visited their wives, than by an indiscreet and constant intercourse, sufficient to confound and destroy the wisest bounds of distinction which nature has set between them. We do not, even among the savages, see men and women intermingle indiscriminately. In the evening, the family meet together; every one passes the night with his wife; when the day begins, they separate again, and the two sexes enjoy nothing in common, but their meals at most. This is the order which, from its universality, appears to be most natural, and even in those countries where it is perverted, we may perceive some vestiges of it remaining. In France, where the men have submitted to live after the fashion of the women, and to be continually shut up in a room with them, you may perceive, from their involuntary motions, that they are under confinement. While the ladies sit quietly, or loll upon their couch, you may perceive the men get up, go, come, and sit down again, perpetually restless, as if a kind of mechanical instinct continually counteracted the restraint they suffered, and prompted them, in their own despite, to that active and laborious life for which nature intended them. They are the only people in the world where the men *stand* at the

theatre, as if they went into the pit to relieve themselves of the fatigue of having been sitting all day in a dining-room. In short they are so sensible of the irksomeness of this effeminate and sedentary indolence, that in order to chequer it with some degree of activity at least, they yield their places at home to strangers, and go to other men's wives, in order to alleviate their disgust!

The example of Mrs. Wolmar's family contributes greatly to support the maxim she establishes. —Every one, as it were, being confined to their proper sex, the women there live in a great measure apart from the men. In order to prevent any suspicious connexions between them, her great secret is to keep both one and the other constantly employed, for their occupations are so different, that nothing but idleness can bring them together. In the morning each apply to their proper business, and no one is at leisure to interrupt the other. After dinner, the men are employed in the garden, the yard, or in some other rural occupation: the women are busy in the nursery till the hour comes at which they take a walk with the children, and sometimes indeed with the mistress, which is very agreeable to them, as it is the only time in which they take the air. The men, being sufficiently tired with their day's work, have seldom any inclination to walk, and therefore rest themselves within doors.

Every Sunday, after evening service, the women meet again in the nursery, with some friend or relation, whom they invite in their turns by Mrs. Wolmar's consent. There they have a little collation prepared for them by Eloisa's direction; and she permits them to chat, sing, run, or play at some little game of skill, fit to please children, and such as they may bear a part in themselves. The entertainment is composed of syllabubs, cream, and different kinds of cakes, with such other little viands as suit the taste of women and children. Wine is almost excluded; and the men, who are rarely admitted of this little female party, never are present at this collation, which Eloisa seldom misses. I am the only man who has obtained this privilege. Last Sunday, with great importunity, I got leave to attend her there. She took great pains to make me consider it as a very singular favour. She told me aloud that she granted it for that once only, and that she had even refused M. Wolmar himself. You may imagine whether this difficulty of admission does not flatter female vanity a little, and whether a footman would be a welcome visitor where his master is excluded.

I made a most delicious repast with them.—Where will you find such cream-cakes as we have here? Imagine what they must be, made in a dairy where Eloisa presides, and eaten in her com-

pany. Fanny presented me with some cream, some seed-cake, and other little comfits. All was gone in an instant. Eloisa smiled at my appetite. "I find (said she, giving me another plate of cream) that your appetite does you credit every where, and that you make as good a figure among a club of females, as you do among the Valaisans."—"But I do not (answered I) make the repast with more impunity; the one may be attended with intoxication as well as the other; and reason may be as much distracted in a nursery as in a wine cellar." She cast her eyes down without making any reply, blushed, and began to play with her children. This was enough to sting me with remorse. This, my lord, was the first indiscretion, and I hope it will be the last.

There was a certain air of primitive simplicity in this assembly, which affected me very sensibly. I perceived the same cheerfulness in every countenance, and perhaps more openness than if there had been men in company. The familiarity which was observable between the mistress and her servants, being founded on sincere attachment and confidence, only served to establish respect and authority; and the services rendered and received appeared like so many testimonies of reciprocal friendship. There was nothing, even to the very choice of the collation, but what contributed to make this assembly engaging. Milk

and sugar are naturally adapted to the taste of the fair-sex, and may be deemed the symbols of innocence and sweetness, which are their most becoming ornaments. Men, on the contrary, are fond of high flavours, and strong liquors; a kind of nourishment more suitable to the active and laborious life for which nature has designed them; and when these different tastes come to be blended, it is an infallible sign that the distinction between the two sexes is inordinately confounded. In fact, I have observed that, in France, where the women constantly intermix with the men, they have entirely lost their relish for milk meats, and the men have in some measure lost their taste for wine; and in England, where the two sexes are better distinguished, the proper taste of each is better preserved. In general I am of opinion that you may very often form some judgment of people's disposition, from their choice of food.—The Italians, who live a great deal on vegetables, are soft and effeminate. You Englishmen, who are great eaters of meat, have something harsh in your rigid virtue, and which favours of barbarism. The Swiss, who is naturally of a calm, gentle, and cold constitution, but hot and violent when in a passion, is fond both of one and the other, and drinks milk and wine indiscriminately. The Frenchman, who is pliant and changeable, lives upon all kinds of food, and conforms himself to

every taste. Eloisa herself, may serve as an instance : for though she makes her meals with a keen appetite, yet she does not love meat, ragouts, or salt, and never yet tasted wine by itself. Some excellent roots, eggs, cream, and fruit, compose her ordinary diet, and was it not for fish, of which she is likewise very fond, she would be a perfect Pythagorean.

To keep the women in order would signify nothing, if the men were not likewise under proper regulations ; and this branch of domestic economy, which is not of less importance, is still more difficult ; for the attack is generally more lively than the defence : the guardian of human nature intended it so. In the common wealth, Citizens are kept in order by principles of morality and virtue : but how are we to keep servants and mercenaries under proper regulations, otherwise than by force and restraint ? The art of a master consists in disguising this restraint under the veil of pleasure and interest, that what they are obliged to do may seem the result of their own inclination. Sunday being a day of idleness, and servants having a right of going where they please, when business does not require their duty at home, that one day often destroys all the good examples and lessons of the other six. The habit of frequenting public houses, the converse and maxims of their comrades, the company of loose women, soon render them unserviceable to their masters, and unprofit-

able to themselves ; and by teaching them a thousand vices, make them unfit for servitude, and unworthy of liberty.

To remedy this inconvenience, they endeavour to keep them at home by the same motives which induce them to go abroad. Why do they go abroad ? To drink and play at a public-house. They drink and play at home. All the difference is, that the wine costs them nothing, that they do not get drunk, and that there are some winners at play without any losers. The following is the method taken for this purpose.

Behind the house is a shady walk, where they have fixed the lists. There, in the summer time, the livery servants and the men in the yard meet every Sunday, after sermon time, to play in little detached parties, not for money, for it is not allowed, nor for wine, which is given them ; but for a prize, furnished by their master's generosity, which is generally some piece of goods or apparel fit for their use. The number of games in proportion to the value of the prize, so that when the prize is somewhat considerable, as a pair of silver buckles, a neckcloth, a pair of silk stockings, a fine hat, or any thing of that kind, they have generally several bouts to decide it. They are not confined to one particular game, but they change them, that one man, who happens to excel in a particular game, may not carry off all the

prizes, and that they may grow stronger and more dexterous by a variety of exercises. At one time, the contest is who shall first reach a mark at the other end of the walk; at another time it is who shall throw the same stone farthest; then again it is who shall carry the same weight longest. Sometimes they contend for a prize, by shooting at a mark. Most of these games are attended with some little preparations, which serve to prolong them, and render them entertaining. Their master and mistress often honour them with their presence; they sometimes take their children with them; nay, even strangers resort thither, excited by curiosity, and they desire nothing better than to bear a share in the sport; but none are ever admitted without M. Wolmar's approbation, and the consent of the players, who would not find their account in granting it readily. This custom has imperceptibly become a kind of show, in which the actors, being animated by the presence of the spectators, prefer the glory of applause to the lucre of the prize.— As these exercises make them more active and vigorous, they set a greater value on themselves, and, being accustomed to estimate their importance from their own intrinsic worth, rather than from their possessions, they prize honour, notwithstanding they are footmen, beyond money.

It would be tedious to enumerate all the advantages which they derive from a practice so

trifling in appearance, and which is always despised by little minds ; but it is the prerogative of true genius to produce great effects by inconsiderable means. M. Wolmar has assured me that these little institutions, which his wife first suggested, scarce stood him in fifty crowns a year. “ But (said he) how often do you think I am repaid this sum in my housekeeping and my affairs in general, by the vigilance and attention with which I am served by these faithful servants, who derive all their pleasures from their master ; by the interest they take in a family which they consider as their own ; by the advantage I reap in their labours, from the vigour they acquire at their exercises ; by the benefit of keeping them always in health, in preserving them from those excesses which are common to men in their station, and from those disorders which frequently attend such excesses ; by securing them from any propensity to knavery, which is an infallible consequence of irregularity, and by confirming them in the practice of honesty ; in short, by the pleasure of having such agreeable recreations within ourselves at such a trifling expence ? If there are any among them, either man or woman, who do not care to conform to our regulations, but prefer the liberty of going where they please, on various pretences, we never refuse to give them leave : but we consider this licentious turn as a

very suspicious symptom, and we are always ready to mistrust such dispositions. Thus these little amusements, which furnish us with good servants, serve also as a direction to us in the choice of them."—I must confess, my lord, that except in this family I never saw the same men made good domestics for personal service, good husbandmen for tilling the ground, good soldiers for the defence of their country, and honest fellows in any station into which fortune may chance to throw them.

In the winter, their pleasures vary, as well as their labours. On a Sunday, all the servants in the family, and even the neighbours, men and women indiscriminately, meet after service-time in a hall where there is a good fire, some wine, fruits, cakes, and a fiddle, to which they dance. Mrs. Wolmar never fails to be present, for some time at least, in order to preserve decorum and modesty by her presence, and it is not uncommon for her to dance herself, though among her own people. When I was first made acquainted with this custom, it appeared to me not quite conformable to the strictness of Protestant morals. I told Eloisa so; and she answered me to the following effect:

• Pure morality is charged with so many severe duties, that if it is overburdened with forms, which are in themselves indifferent, they will always be of prejudice to what is really essential.

This is said to be the case with the monks in general, who, being slaves to rules totally immaterial, are utter strangers to the meaning of honour and virtue. This defect is less observable among us, though we are not wholly exempt from it. Our churchmen, who are as much superior to other priests in knowledge, as our religion is superior to all others in purity, do nevertheless maintain some maxims, which seem to be rather founded on prejudice than reason. Of this kind, is that which condemns dancing and assemblies, as if there were more harm in dancing than singing, as if each of these amusements were not equally a propensity of nature, and as if it were a crime to divert ourselves publicly with an innocent and harmless recreation. For my own part, I think, on the contrary, that every time there is a concourse of the two sexes, every public diversion becomes innocent, by being public; whereas, the most laudable employment becomes suspicious in a *tête-à-tête* party*. Man and women were formed for each other; their union by marriage is the end of nature. All false religion is at war with nature; our's, which conforms

* In my letter to M. D'Alembert, concerning the theatres, I have transcribed the following passage, and some others; but as I was then preparing this edition, I thought it better to wait this publication, till I took notice of the quotation.

to and rectifies natural propensity, proclaims a divine institution which is most suitable to mankind. Religion ought not to increase the embarrassment which civil regulations throw in the way of matrimony, by difficulties which the Gospel does not create, and which are contrary to the true spirit of Christianity. Let any one tell me where young people can have an opportunity of conceiving a mutual liking, and of seeing each other with more decorum and circumspection than in an assembly, where the eyes of the spectators being constantly upon them, oblige them to behave with peculiar caution? How can we offend God by an agreeable and wholesome exercise, suitable to the vivacity of youth; an exercise which consists in the art of presenting ourselves to each other with grace and elegance, and wherein the presence of the spectator imposes a decorum which no one dares to violate? Can we conceive a more effectual method to avoid imposition with respect to person at least, by displaying ourselves with all our natural graces and defects before those whose interest it is to know us thoroughly, ere they oblige themselves to love us? —Is not the obligation of reciprocal affection greater than that of self-love, and is it not an attention worthy of a pious and virtuous pair, who propose to marry, thus to prepare their hearts for that mutual love which Heaven prompts?

“What is the consequence, in those places

where people are under a continual restraint, where the most innocent gaiety is punished as criminal, where the young people of different sexes dare not meet in public, and where the indiscreet severity of the pastor preaches nothing, in the name of God, but servile constraint, sadness, and melancholy? They find means to elude an insufferable tyranny, which nature and reason disavow. When gay and sprightly youth are debarred from lawful pleasures, they substitute others more dangerous in their stead. Private parties, artfully concerted, supply the place of public assemblies. By being obliged to concealment, as if they were criminal, they at length become so in fact. Harmless joy loves to display itself in the face of the world, but vice is a friend to darkness; and innocence and secrecy never subsist long together. My dear friend (said she, grasping my hand, as if she meant to convey her repentance, and communicate the purity of her own heart to mine) who can be more sensible of the importance of this truth than ourselves? What sorrow and troubles, what tears and remorse we might have prevented for so many years past, if we could but have foreseen how dangerous a private intercourse was to that virtue which we always loved!

“ Besides (said Mrs. Wolmar, in a softer tone, it is not in a numerous assembly where we are

seen and heard by all the world, but in private parties, where secrecy and freedom is indulged, that our morals are in danger. It is from this principle, that, whenever my domestics meet, I am glad to see them all together. I even approve of their inviting such young people in the neighbourhood whose company will not corrupt them ; and I hear with pleasure, that, when they mean to commend the morals of any of our young neighbours, they say—He is admitted at Mr. Wolmar's. We have a further view in this. Our men-servants are all very young, and, among the women, the governess is yet single ; it is not reasonable that the retired life they lead with us should debar them of an opportunity of forming an honest connexion. We endeavour, therefore, in these little meetings, to give them this opportunity, under our inspection, that we may assist them in their choice ; and thus, by endeavouring to make happy families, we increase the felicity of our own.

“ I ought now to justify myself for dancing with these good people, but I rather choose to pass sentence on myself in this respect, and frankly confess that my chief motive is the pleasure I take in the exercise. You know that I always resembled my cousin in her passion for dancing ; but after the death of my mother, I bade adieu to the ball, and all public assemblies ; I kept my resolution, even to the day of my

marriage, and will keep it still, without thinking it any violation to dance now and then in my own house with my guests and my domestics. It is an exercise very good for my health during the sedentary life which we are obliged to live here in winter. I find it an innocent amusement; for after a good dance my conscience does not reproach me. It amuses M. Wolmar likewise, and all my coquetry in this particular is only to please him. I am the occasion of his coming into the ball-room; the good people are best satisfied when they are honoured with their master's presence; and they express a satisfaction when they see me amongst them. In short, I find that such occasional familiarity forms an agreeable connexion and attachment between us, which approaches nearer the natural condition of mankind, by moderating the meanness of servitude, and the rigour of authority."

Such, my lord, are the sentiments of Eloisa with respect to dancing, and I have often wondered how so much affability could consist with such a degree of subordination, and how she and her husband could so often stoop to level themselves with their servants, and yet the latter never be tempted to assume equality in their turn. I question if any Asiatic monarchs are attended in their palaces with more respect than Mr. and Mrs. Wolmar are served in their own house. I never knew any commands less imperious than

theirs, or more readily executed ; if they ask for any thing, their servants fly ; if they excuse their failings, they themselves are nevertheless sensible of their faults. I was never better convinced how much the force of what is said depends on the mode of expression.

This has led me into a reflection on the affected gravity of masters ; which is, that it is rather to be imputed to their own failings, than to the effects of their familiarity, that they are despised in their families, and that the insolence of servants is rather an indication of a vicious than of a weak master : for nothing gives them such assurances, as the knowledge of his vices, and they consider all discoveries of that kind as so many dispensations, which free them from their obedience to a man whom they can no longer respect.

Servants imitate their masters, and by copying them awkwardly, they render those defects more conspicuous in themselves, which the polish of education, in some measure, disguised in the others. At Paris, I used to judge of the ladies of my acquaintance, by the air and manners of their waiting-women, and this rule never deceived me. Besides that, the lady's woman, when she becomes the confidant of her mistress's secrets, makes her buy her discretion at a dear rate, she likewise frames her conduct according to her lady's sentiments, and discloses all her maxims, by an awk-

ward imitation. In every instance, the master's example is more efficacious than his authority ; it is not natural to suppose that their servants will be honefter than themselves. It is to no purpose to make a noise, to swear, to abuse them, to turn them off, to get a new set ; all this avails nothing towards making good servants. When they who do not trouble themselves about being hated and despised by their domestics, nevertheless imagine that they are well served, the reason of their mistake is, that they are contented with what they see, and satisfied with an appearance of diligence, without observing the thousand secret prejudices they suffer continually, and of which they cannot discover the source. But where is the man so devoid of honour, as to be able to endure the contempt of every one round him ? Where is the woman so abandoned, as not to be susceptible of insults ? How many ladies, both at Paris and in London, who think themselves greatly respected, would burst into tears if they heard what was said of them in their anti-chambers ? Happily for their peace, they comfort themselves by taking these Arguses for weak creatures, and by flattering themselves that they are blind to those practices which they do not even deign to hide from them. They likewise in their turn discover, by their sullen obedience, the contempt they have for their mistresses. Masters and servants be-

come mutually sensibly that it is not worth their while to conciliate each other's esteem.

The behaviour of servants seems to me to be the most certain and nice proof of the master's virtue; and I remember, my lord, to have formed a good opinion of yours at Valais, without knowing you, purely because, though you spoke somewhat harshly to your attendants, they were not the less attached to you, and that they expressed as much respect for you in your absence, as if you had been within hearing. It has been said that no man is a hero in the eyes of his valet-de-chambre; perhaps not; but every worthy man will enjoy his servant's esteem; which sufficiently proves that heroism is only a vain phantom, and that nothing is solid but virtue. The power of its empire is particularly observable here in the lowest commendations of the servants. Commendations the less to be suspected, as they do not consist of vain eulogiums, but of an artless expression of their feelings. As they cannot suppose from any thing which they see, that other masters are not like theirs, they therefore do not commend them on account of those virtues which they conceive to be common to masters in general, but, in the simplicity of their hearts, they thank God for having sent the rich to make those under them happy, and to be a comfort to the poor.

Servitude is a state so unnatural to mankind,

that it cannot subsist without some degree of discontent. Nevertheless, they respect their master, and say nothing. If any murmurings escape them against their mistress, they are more to her honour than encomiums would be. No one complains that she is wanting in kindness to them, but that she pays so much regard to others; no one can endure that his zeal should be put in competition with that of his comrades, and as every one imagines himself foremost in attachment, he would be first in favour. This is their only complaint, and their greatest injustice.

There is not only a proper subordination among those of inferior station, but a perfect harmony among those of equal rank; and this is not the least difficult part of domestic economy.—Amidst the clashings of jealousy and self-interest, which make continual divisions in families not more numerous than this, we seldom find servants united but at the expense of their masters. If they agree, it is to rob in concert; if they are honest, every one shows his importance at the expense of the rest: they must either be enemies or accomplices, and it is very difficult to find a way of guarding, at the same time, both against their knavery and their dissensions. The masters of families, in general, know no other method but that of choosing the alternative between these two inconveniences. Some, preferring interest to honour, foment a quarrelsome disposition

among their servants, by means of private reports, and think it a masterpiece of prudence to make them superintendants and spies over each other. Others, of a more indolent nature, rather choose that their servants should rob them, and live peaceably among themselves; they pique themselves upon discountenancing any information which a faithful servant may give them out of pure zeal. Both are equally to blame. The first, by exciting continual disturbances in their families, which are incompatible with good order and regularity, get together a heap of knaves and informers, who are busy in betraying their fellow-servants, that they may hereafter perhaps betray their masters. The second, by refusing any information with regard to what passes in their families, countenance combinations against themselves, encourage the wicked, dishearten the good, and only maintain a pack of arrogant and idle rascals, at a great expence, who, agreeing together at their master's cost, look upon their services as a matter of favour, and their thefts as perquisites*.

* I have narrowly examined into the management of great families, and have found it impossible for a master who has twenty servants, to know whether he has one honest man among them, and not to mistake the greatest rascal perhaps to be that one. This alone would give me an aversion to riches. The rich lose one of the sweetest pleasures of life, the pleasure of confidence and esteem. They purchase all their gold at a dear rate!

It is a capital error in domestic as well as in civil economy, to oppose one vice to another, or to attempt an equilibrium between them, as if that which undermines the foundations of all order could ever tend to establish regularity.— This mistaken policy only serves to unite every inconvenience. When particular vices are tolerated in a family, they do not reign alone. Let one take root, a thousand will soon spring up. They presently ruin the servants who harbour them, undo the master who tolerates them, and corrupt or injure the children who remark them with attention. What father can be so unworthy as to put any advantage whatever in competition with this last inconvenience? What honest man would choose to be master of a family, if it was impossible for him to maintain peace and fidelity in his house at the same time, and if he must be obliged to purchase the attachment of his servants at the expence of their mutual good understanding?

Who does not see, that in this family, they have not even an idea of any such difficulty? so much does the union among the several members proceed from the attachment to the head.— It is here we may perceive a striking instance, how impossible it is to have a sincere affection for a master without loving every thing that belongs to him; a truth which is the real foundation of

Christian charity. Is it not very natural that the children of the same father should live together like brethren? This is what they tell us every day at church, without making us feel the sentiment; and this is what the domestics in this family feel, without being told it.

This disposition to good fellowship is owing to a choice of proper subjects. M. Wolmar, when he hires his servants, does not examine whether they suit his wife and himself, but whether they suit each other, and if they were to discover a settled antipathy between two of the best servants, it would be sufficient for them to discharge one: for, says Eloisa, in so small a family, a family where they never go abroad, but are constantly before each other, they ought to agree perfectly among themselves. They ought to consider it as their father's house, where all are of the same family. One who happens to be disagreeable to the rest is enough to make them hate the place; and that disagreeable object being constantly before their eyes, they would neither be easy themselves, nor suffer us to be quiet.

After having made the best assortment in their power, they unite them, as it were, by the services which they oblige each to render the other, and they contrive that it shall be the real interest of every one to be beloved by his fellow servants. No one is so well received who solicits a favour for himself, as when he asks it for another; so

hat whoever has any thing to request, endeavours to engage another. to intercede for him; and this they do with greater readiness, since, whether their master grants or refuses the favour requested, he never fails to acknowledge the merit of the person interceding. On the contrary, both he and Mrs. Wolmar always reject the solicitations of those who only regard themselves. Why, say they, should I grant what is desired in your favour, who have never made me any request in favour of another? Is it reasonable that you should be more favoured than your companions, because they are more obliging than you? They do more: they engage them to serve each other in private without any ostentation, and without assuming any merit. This is the more easily accomplished, as they know that their master, who is witness of their discretion, will esteem them the more; thus self-interest is a gainer, and self-love no loser. They are so convinced of this general disposition to oblige, and they have such confidence in each other, that when they have any favour to ask, they frequently mention it at table, by way of conversation; very often, without further trouble, they find that the thing has been requested and granted, and as they do not know whom to thank, their obligation is to all.

It is by this, and such like methods, that they beget an attachment among them, resulting from,

and subordinate to, the zeal they have for their master. Thus, far from leaguings together to his prejudice, they are only united for his service. However it may be their interest to love each other, they have still stronger motives for pleasing him; their zeal for his service gets the better of their mutual good-will, and each considering himself as injured by losses which may make their master less able to recompense a faithful servant, they are all equally incapable of suffering any individual to do him wrong unnoticed. This principle of policy, which is established in this family, seems to have somewhat sublime in it; and I cannot sufficiently admire how Mr. and Mrs. Wolmar have been able to transform the vile function of an informer into an office of zeal, integrity, and courage, as noble, or at least as praise-worthy, as it was among the Romans.

They began by subverting, or rather by preventing, in a plain and perspicuous manner, and by affecting instances, that servile and criminal practice, that mutual toleration at the master's cost, which a worthless servant never fails to inculcate to a good one, under the mask of a charitable maxim. They made them understand, that the precept which enjoins us to hide our neighbour's faults relates to those only which do injury to no one; that if they are witnesses to any injustice which injures a third person, and do not discover it, they are guilty of it themselves; and

that as nothing can oblige us to conceal such faults in others, but a consciousness of our own defects, therefore no one would choose to countenance knaves, if he was not a knave himself. Upon these principles, which are just in general as between man and man, but more strictly so with respect to the close connexion between master and servant, they hold it here as an incontestable truth, that whoever sees their master wronged, without making a discovery, is more guilty than he who did the wrong; for he suffers himself to be misled by the prospect of advantage, but the other, in cold blood, and without any view of interest, can be induced to secrecy by no other motive than a thorough disregard of justice, an indifference towards the welfare of the family he serves, and a hidden desire of copying the example he conceals. Therefore, even where the fault is considerable, the guilty party may nevertheless sometimes hope for pardon, but the witness who conceals the fact is infallibly dismissed, as a man of bad disposition.

In return, they receive no accusation which may be suspected to proceed from injustice and calumny; that is to say, they admit of none in the absence of the accused. If any one comes to make a report against his fellow servant, or to prefer a personal complaint against him, they ask him whether he is sufficiently informed, that is to say, whether he has entered into any previous inqui-

ry with the person whom he is going to accuse? If he answers in the negative, they ask him how he can judge of an action, when he is not acquainted with the motives to it? The fact, say they, may depend on some circumstance to which you are a stranger; there may be some particulars which may serve to justify or excuse it, and which you know nothing of. How can you presume to condemn any one's conduct, before you know by what motives it is directed? One word of explanation would probably have rendered it justifiable in your eyes. Why then do you run the risk of condemning an action wrongfully, and of exposing me to participate of your injustice? If he assures them that he has entered into a previous explanation with the accused; why then, say they, do you come without him, as if you was afraid that he would falsify what you are going to relate? By what right do you neglect taking the same precaution with respect to me, which you think proper to use with regard to yourself? Is it reasonable to desire me to judge of a fact from your report, of which you refuse to judge yourself by the testimony of your own eyes; and would not you be answerable for the partial judgment I might form, if I was to remain satisfied with your bare deposition? In the end, they direct them to summon the party accused; if they consent, the matter is soon decided; if they refuse, they dismiss them with a severe re-

primed, but they keep the secret, and watch them both so narrowly, that they are not long at a loss to know which is in fault.

This rule is so well known, and so well established, that you never hear a servant in this family speak ill of his absent comrade, for they are all sensible that it is the way to pass for a liar and a coward. When any one of them accuses another, it is openly, frankly, and not only to his face, but in the presence of all his fellow servants, that they who are witnesses to their accusation, may be vouchers of their integrity. In case of any personal disputes among them, the difference is generally made up by mediators, without troubling Mr. and Mrs. Wolmar; but when the interest of the master is at stake, the matter cannot remain a secret; the guilty party must either accuse himself, or be accused. These little pleadings happen very seldom, and never but at table, in the rounds which Eloisa makes every day while her people are at dinner or supper, which M. Wolmar pleasantly calls her general sessions. After having patiently attended to the accusation and the defence, if the affairs regard her interest, she thanks the accuser for his zeal. I am sensible, says she, that you have a regard for your fellow-servant; you have always spoken well of him, and I commend you, because the love of your duty and of justice has prevailed over your private af-

fections ; it is thus that a faithful servant and an honest man ought to behave. If the party accused is not in fault, she always subjoins some compliment to her justification of his innocence. But if he is really guilty, she in some measure spares his shame before the rest. She supposes that he has something to communicate in his defence, which he does not choose to declare in public ; she appoints an hour to hear him in private, and it is then that she or her husband talk to him as they think proper. What is very remarkable, is that the most severe of the two is not most dreaded, and that they are less afraid of M. Wolmar's solemn reprimand, than of Eloisa's affecting reproaches. The former speaking the language of truth and justice, humbles and confounds the guilty ; the latter strikes them with the most cruel remorse, by convincing them with what regret she is forced to withdraw her kindness from them. She sometimes extorts tears of grief and shame from them, and it is not uncommon for her to be moved herself when she sees them repent, in hopes that she may not be obliged to abide by her word.

They who judge of these concerns by what passes in their own families, or among their neighbours, would probably deem them frivolous or tiresome. But you, my Lord, who have such high notions of the duties and enjoyments of a master of a family, and who are sensible what an ascen-

dancy natural disposition and virtue have over the human heart, you perceive the importance of these minutiae, and know on what circumstances their success depends. Riches do not make a man rich, as is well observed in some romance. The wealth of a man is not in his coffers, but in the use he makes of what he draws out of them; for our possessions do not become our own, but by the uses to which we allot them, and abuses are always more inexhaustible than riches; whence it happens that our enjoyments are not in proportion to our expences, but depend on the just regulation of them. An idiot may toss ingots of gold into the sea, and say he has enjoyed them; but what comparison is there between such an extravagant enjoyment, and that which a wise man would have derived from the least part of their value? Order and regularity, which multiply and perpetuate the use of riches, are alone capable of converting the enjoyment of them into felicity. But if real property arises from the relation which our possessions bear to us, if it is rather the use than the acquisition of riches which confers it, what can be more proper subjects of attention for a master of a family than domestic economy, and the prudent regulation of his household, in which the most perfect correspondences more immediately concern him, and where the

happiness of every individual is an addition to the felicity of the head?

Are the most wealthy the most happy? No. How then does wealth contribute to felicity? But every well-regulated family is emblematic of the master's mind. Gilded ceilings, luxury, and magnificence, only serve to show the vanity of those who display such parade; whereas, whenever you see order without melancholy, peace without slavery, plenty without profusion, you may say, with confidence, the master of this house is a happy being.

For my own part, I think the most certain sign of true content is a domestic and retired life, and that they who are continually resorting to others in quest of happiness do not enjoy it at home. A father of a family, who amuses himself at home, is rewarded for his continual attention to domestic concerns, by the constant enjoyment of the most agreeable sensations of nature. He is the only one who can be properly said to be master of his own happiness, because, like Heaven itself, he is happy in desiring nothing more than he enjoys. Like the Supreme Being, he does not wish to enlarge his possessions, but to make them really his own, under proper directions, and by using them conformably to the just relations of things: if he does not enrich himself by new acquisitions, he enriches himself by the true enjoyment of what he possesses. He once only enjoyed the in-

come of his lands, he now enjoys the lands themselves, by overlooking their culture, and surveying them from time to time. His servant was a stranger to him : he is now part of his enjoyment ; his child : he makes him his own. Formerly he had only power over his servant's actions ; now he has authority over his inclinations. He was his master only by paying him wages ; now he rules by the sacred dominion of benevolence and esteem. Though fortune spoils him of his wealth, she can never rob him of those affections which are attached to him ; she cannot deprive a father of his children ; all the difference is, that he maintained them yesterday, and that they will support him to-morrow. It is thus that we may learn the true enjoyment of our riches, of our family, and of ourselves ; it is thus, that the minutiae of a family become agreeable to a worthy man who knows the value of them ; it is thus, that far from considering these little duties as troublesome, he makes them a part of his happiness, and derives the glory and pleasure of human nature from these noble and affecting offices.

If these precious advantages are despised, or little known, and if the few who endeavour to acquire them seldom obtain them, the reason, in both cases, is the same. There are many simple and sublime duties, which few people can relish

and fulfil. Such are those of the master of a family, for which the air and bustle of the world give him a disgust, and which he never discharges properly when he is only inflamed by motives of avarice and interest. Some think themselves excellent masters, and are only careful economists; their income may thrive, and their family nevertheless be in a bad condition. They ought to have more enlarged views to direct an administration of such importance, so as to give it a happy issue. The first thing to be attended to in the due regulation of a family, is to admit none but honest people, who will not have any secret intention to disturb that regularity. But are honesty and servitude so compatible, that we may hope to find servants who are honest men? No, my lord, if we would have them, we must not inquire for them, but we must make them; and none who are not men of integrity themselves are capable of making others honest. It is to no purpose for a hypocrite to affect an air of virtue; he will never inspire any one with an affection for it, and if he knew how to make virtue amiable, he would be in love with it himself. What do formal lessons avail, when daily example contradicts them, unless to make us suspect that the moralist means to sport with our credulity? What an absurdity are they guilty of who exhort us to do as they say, and not as they act themselves! He who does not act up to what he says, never

speaks to any effect; for the language of the heart is wanting, which alone is persuasive and affecting. I have sometimes heard conversations of this kind held in a gross manner before servants, in order to read them lectures, as they do children sometimes, in an indirect way. Far from having any reason to imagine that they were the dupes of such artifice, I have always observed them smile in secret at their master's folly, who must have taken them for blockheads, by making an awkward display of sentiments before them, which they knew were none of his own.

All these idle subtleties are unknown in this family, and the grand art by which the master and mistress make their servants what they would desire them to be, is to appear themselves before them what they really are. Their behaviour is always frank and open, because they are not in any fear lest their actions should belie their professions. As they themselves do not entertain principles of morality different from those which they inculcate to others, they have no occasion for any extraordinary circumspection in their discourse; a word blundered out unseasonably does not overthrow the principles they have laboured to establish. They do not indiscreetly tell all their affairs, but they openly proclaim all their maxims. Whether at table, or abroad, in private, or in public, their sentiments are still the same;

they ingeniously deliver their opinions on every subject, and without their having any individual in view, every one is instructed by their conversation. As their servants never see them do any thing but what is just, reasonable, and equitable, they do not consider justice as a tax on the poor, as a yoke on the unhappy, and as one of the evils of their condition. The care they take never to let the labourers come in vain, and lose their day's work in seeking after their wages, teaches their servants to set a just value on time. When they see their master so careful of other men's time, each concludes that his own time must be of consequence, and therefore deems idleness the greatest crime he can be guilty of. The confidence which their servants have in their integrity gives that force to their regulations which makes them observed, and prevents abuses. They are not afraid, when they come to receive their weekly gratuities, that their mistress should partially determine the youngest and most active to have been the most diligent. An old servant is not apprehensive lest they should start some quibble, to save the promised augmentation to their wages. They can never hope to take advantage of any division between their master and mistress, in order to make themselves of consequence, and to obtain from one what the other has refused. They who are unmarried are not afraid lest they should oppose their settlement, in order to detain them

longer, and by that means make their service a prejudice to them. If a strange servant was to tell the domestics of this family, that master and servants are in a state of war with each other; that when the latter do the former all the injury they can, they only make lawful reprisals: that masters, being usurpers, liars, and knaves, there can consequently be no harm in using them as they use their prince, the people, or individuals, and in returning those injuries with dexterity, which they offer openly—one who should talk in this manner would not be attended to; they would not give themselves the trouble to controvert or obviate such sentiments; they who give rise to them are the only persons whose business it is to refute them.

You never perceive any sullenness or discontent in the discharge of their duty, because there is never any haughtiness or capriciousness in the orders they receive; nothing is required of them but what is reasonable and expedient, and their master and mistress have too much respect for the dignity of human nature, even in a state of servitude, to put them upon any employment which may debase them. Moreover, nothing here is reckoned mean but vice, and whatever is reasonable and necessary is deemed honourable and becoming.

They do not allow of any intrigues abroad,

neither has any one any inclinations of that kind. They are sensible that their fortune is most firmly attached to their master's, and that they shall never want any thing while his family prospers. Therefore, in serving him, they take care of their own patrimony, and increase it by making their service agreeable: this, above all things, is their interest. But this word is somewhat misapplied here, for I never knew any system of policy by which self-interest was so skilfully directed, and where at the same time it had less influence, than in this family. They all act from a principle of attachment, and one would think that venal souls were purified as soon as they entered into this dwelling of wisdom and union. One would imagine that part of the master's intelligence, and of the mistress's sensibility, was conveyed to each of their servants; they seem so judicious, benevolent, honest, and so much above their station. Their greatest ambition is to do well, to be valued and esteemed; and they consider an obliging expression from their master or mistress in the light of a present.

These, my lord, are the most material observations I have made on that part of the economy of this family which regards the servants and labourers. As to Mr. and Mrs. Wolmar's manner of living, and the education of their children, each of these articles very well deserves a separate letter. You know with what view I began these

remarks; but in truth the whole forms such an agreeable representation, that we need only meditate upon it to advance it, and we require no other inducement than the pleasure it affords us.

LETTER CXXX.

TO LORD B——.

NO, my lord; I do not retract what I have said; in this family, the useful and agreeable are united throughout; but occupations of use are not confined to those pursuits which yield profit: they comprehend further every innocent and harmless amusement which may serve to improve a relish for retirement, labour, and temperance; which may contribute to preserve the mind in a vigorous state, and to keep the heart free from the agitation of tumultuous passions. If inactive indolence begets nothing but melancholy and irksomeness, the delights of an agreeable leisure are the fruits of a laborious life. We only work to enjoy ourselves; this alternative of labour and recreation is our natural state. The repose which serves to refresh us after past labours, and encourage us to renew them, is not less necessary for us than labour itself.

After having admired the good consequences attending the vigilance and attention of the pru-

dent Eliisa, in the conduct of her family, I was witness of the good effects of the recreation she uses in a retired place, where she takes her favourite walk, and which she calls her Elysium.

I had often heard them talk of this Elysium, of which they made a mystery before me. Yesterday, however, the excessive heat being almost equally intolerable both within doors and without, M. Wolmar proposed to his wife to make holiday that afternoon, and instead of going into the nursery towards evening, as usual, to come and breathe the fresh air with us in the orchard: she consented, and thither we went.

This place, though just close to the house, is hidden in such a manner by a shady walk, that it is not visible from any point. The thick foliage with which it is environed renders it impervious to the eye, and it is always carefully locked up. I was scarce got withinside, but the door, being covered with alder and hazle-trees, I could not find out which way I came in; when I turned back, and seeing no door, it seemed as if I had dropped from the clouds.

On my entrance into this disguised orchard, I was seized with an agreeable sensation; the freshness of the thick foliage, the beautiful and lovely verdure, the flowers scattered on each side, the murmuring of the purling stream, and the warbling of a thousand birds, struck my imagination as powerfully as my senses; but at the same time

I thought myself in the most wild and solitary place in nature, and I appeared as if I had been the first mortal who had ever penetrated into this desert spot. Being seized with astonishment, and transported at so unexpected a sight, I remained motionless for some time, and cried out, in an involuntary fit of enthusiasm, "O Tinian! O Juan Fernandez*! Eloisa, the world's end is at your threshold!"—"Many people (said she, with a smile) think in the same manner; but twenty paces at most presently brings them back to Clarens; let us see whether the charm will work longer upon you. This is the same orchard where you have walked formerly, and where you have played at romps with my cousin. You may remember that the grass was almost burned up, the trees thinly planted, affording very little shade, and that there was no water. You find that now it is fresh, verdant, cultivated, embellished with flowers, and well watered; what do you imagine it may have cost me to put it into the condition you see? For you must know that I am the superintendant, and that my husband leaves the entire management of it to me."—"In truth (said I), it has cost you nothing but inattention. It is indeed a delightful spot, but wild and rustic; and I can discover no marks of hu-

* Desert islands in the South Sea, celebrated in Lord Anson's voyage.

man industry. You have concealed the door; the water springs I know not whence; Nature alone has done all the rest, and even you could not have mended her work.”—“It is true (said she) that Nature has done every thing, but under my direction, and you see nothing but what has been done under my orders. Guess once more.”—“First (I replied) I cannot conceive how labour and expence can be made to supply the effects of time. The trees . . .”—“As to them (said M. Wolmar) you may observe that there are none very large, and they were here before. Besides, Eloisa began this work a long while before her marriage, and presently after her mother’s death, when she used to come here with her father in quest of solitude.”—“Well (said I) since you will have these large and massy bowers, these sloping tufts, these umbrageous thickets to be the growth of seven or eight years, and to be partly the work of art, I think you have been a good economist, if you have done all within this vast circumference for two thousand crowns.”—“You have only guessed two thousand crowns too much (says she), for it cost me nothing.”—“How! nothing!”—“No, nothing; unless you place a dozen days work in the year to my gardener’s account, as many to two or three of my people, and some to M. Wolmar, who has sometimes condescended to officiate in my service as a gardener.” I could not comprehend this riddle;

but Eloisa, who had hitherto held me, said to me (letting me loose) "Go, and you will understand it. Farewell Tinian! farewell Juan Fernandez! farewell all enchantment! In a few minutes you will find your way back from the end of the world."

I began to wander over the orchard thus metamorphosed with a kind of ecstasy; and if I found no exotic plants, nor any of the products of the Indies, I found all those which were natural to the soil, disposed and blended in such a manner, as to produce the most cheerful and lively effect. The verdant turf, thick, but short and close, was intermixed with wild thyme, balm, sweet marjoram, and other fragrant herbs. You might perceive a thousand wild flowers dazzle your eyes, among which you would be surprised to discover some garden-flowers, which seemed to grow natural with the rest. I now and then met with shady tufts, as impervious to the rays of the sun, as if they had been in a thick forest. These tufts were composed of trees of a very flexible nature; the branches of which they bend, till they hang on the ground, and take root, as I have seen some trees naturally do in America. In the more open spots, I saw here and there bushes of roses, raspberries, and gooseberries: little plantations of lilac, hazle-trees, alders, seringa, broom, and trefoil, dispersed without any order or symmetry, and which embellished the ground, at the

same time that it gave it the appearance of being overgrown with weeds. I followed the track through irregular and serpentine walks, bordered by these flowery thickets, and covered with a thousand garlands composed of vines, hops, rose-weed, snake-weed, and other plants of that kind, with which honey-suckles and jessamine deigned to interwine. These garlands seemed as if they were carelessly scattered from one tree to another, and formed a kind of drapery over our heads, which sheltered us from the sun; while under foot we had smooth, agreeable, and dry walking upon a fine moss, without sand or grass, or any rugged shoots. Then it was I first discovered, not without astonishment, that this verdant and bushy umbrage, which had deceived me so much at a distance, was composed of these luxuriant and creeping plants, which running all along the trees, formed a thick foliage over-head, and afforded shade and freshness under foot. I observed, likewise, that by means of common industry, they had made several of these plants take root in the trunks of the trees, so that they spread more, being nearer the top. You will readily conceive that the fruit is not the better for these additions; but this is the only spot where they have sacrificed the useful to the agreeable, and in the rest of their grounds they have taken such care of the trees, that, without the orchard, the return of fruit is greater than it was formerly.

If you do but consider how delightful it is to meet with wild fruit in the midst of a wood, and to refresh one's self with it, you will easily conceive what a pleasure it must be to meet with excellent and ripe fruit in this artificial desert, though it grows but here and there, and has not the best appearance : which gives one the pleasure of searching, and selecting the best.

All these little walks were bordered and crossed by a clear and limpid rivulet, which one while winded through the grass and flowers, in streams scarce perceptible ; at another, rushed in more copious floods upon a clear and speckled gravel, which rendered the water more transparent. You might perosive the springs rise and bubble out of the earth, and sometimes you might observe deep canals, in which the calm and gentle fluid served as a mirror to reflect the objects around. " Now (said I to Eloisa), I comprehend all the rest ; but these waters which I see on every side."—" They come from thence," she replied, pointing to that side where the terrace lies. " It is the same stream which, at a vast expence, supplied the fountain in the flower-garden, for which nobody cares. M. Wolmar will not destroy it, out of respect to my father, who had it made ; but with what pleasure we come here every day to see this water run through the orchard, which we never look at in the garden! —The fountain plays for the entertainment of

strangers; this little rivulet flows for our amusement. It is true, that I have likewise brought hither the water from the public fountain, which emptied itself into the lake, through the highway, to the detriment of passengers, besides its running to waste, without profit to any one. It formed an elbow at the foot of the orchard, between two rows of willows; I have taken them within my inclosure, and I bring the same water hither through different channels."

I perceived then that all the contrivance consisted in managing these streams, so as to make them flow in meanders, by separating and uniting them at proper places, by making them run as little upon the slope as possible, in order to lengthen their course, and make the most of a few little murmuring cascades. A lay of earth, covered with some gravel from the lake, and strewed over with shells, forms a bed for these waters.—The same streams running at proper distances under some large tiles covered with earth and turf, on a level with the ground, form a kind of artificial springs, where they issue forth. Some small streams spout through pipes on some rugged places, and bubble as they fall. The ground thus refreshed and watered, continually yields fresh flowers, and keeps the grass always verdant and beautiful.

The more I wandered over this delightful asylum, the more I found the agreeable sensation

improve which I experienced at my first entrance: nevertheless my curiosity kept me in exercise; I was more eager to view the objects around me than to enquire into the cause of the impressions they made on me, and I chose to resign myself to that delightful contemplation, without taking the trouble of reflection; but Mrs. Wolmar drew me out of my reverie, by taking me under the arm. "All that you see (said she) is nothing but vegetable and inanimate nature, which, in spite of us, always leaves behind it a melancholy idea of solitude. Come and view nature animated and more affecting. There you will discover some new charm every minute in the day."—"You anticipate me (said I), I hear a confused chirping noise, and I see but few birds; I suppose you have an aviary."—"True (said she), let us go to it." I durst not as yet declare what I thought of this aviary; but there was something in the idea of it which disgusted me, and did not seem to correspond with the rest.

We went down through a thousand turnings, to the bottom of the orchard, where I found all the water collected in a fine rivulet, flowing gently between two rows of old willows, which had been frequently lopped. Their tops being hollow, and half bare, formed a kind of vessel, from whence, by the contrivance I just now mentioned, grew several tufts of honey-suckles, of which one part intertwined among the branches,

and the other dropped carelessly along the side of the rivulet. Near the extremity of the enclosure was a little basin bordered with grass, bulrushes, and weeds, which served as a watering-place to the aviary, and was the last use made of this water, so precious and so well husbanded.

Somewhat beyond this basin was a platform, which was terminated, in an angle of the enclosure, by a hillock planted with a number of little trees of all kinds; the smallest stood towards the summit, and their size increased in proportion as the ground grew lower, which made their tops appear to be horizontal, or at least showed that they were one day intended to be so. In the front stood a dozen of trees, which were young as yet, but of a nature to grow very large, such as the beech, the elm, the ash, and the acacia. The groves on this side served as an asylum to that vast number of birds which I had heard chirping at a distance, and it was under the shade of this foliage, as under a large umbrella, that you might see them hop about, run, frisk, provoke each other, and fight, as if they had not perceived us. They were so far from flying at our approach, that, according to the notion with which I was prepossessed, I imagined them to have been enclosed within a wire; but when we came to the border of the basin, I saw several of them alight, and come towards us through a short walk, which parted the platform in two, and made a commu-

niation between the basin and the aviary. M. Wolmar then going round the basin, scattered two or three handfuls of mixed grain, which he had in his pocket, along the walk, and when he retired, the birds flocked together, and began to feed like so many chickens, with such an air of familiarity, that I plainly perceived they had been trained up to it. "This is charming (said I): your using the word aviary, surprised me at first, but I now see what it is; I perceive that you invite them as your guests, instead of confining them as your prisoners."—"What do you mean by our guests? (replied Eloisa) it is we who are theirs. They are masters here, and we pay them for being admitted sometimes."—"Very well (said I), but how did these masters get possession of this spot? How did you collect together so many voluntary inhabitants? I never heard of any attempt of this kind, and I could not have believed that such a design could have succeeded, if I had not evidence of it before my eyes."—"Time and patience, (said M. Wolmar) have worked this miracle. These are expedients which the rich scarce ever think of in their pleasures. Always in haste for enjoyment, force and money are the only instruments they know how to employ; they have birds in cages, and friends at so much a month. If the servants ever came near this place, you would soon see the birds disappear; and if you perceive vast numbers of

them at present, the reason is, that this spot has always, in some degree, been a refuge for them. There is no bringing them together where there are none to invite them; but where there are some already, it is easy to increase their numbers, by anticipating all their wants, by not frightening them, by suffering them to hatch with security, and by never disturbing the young ones in their nest; for by these means, such as are there abide there, and those which come after them continue. This grove was already in being, though it was divided from the orchard; Eloisa has only enclosed it by a quickset hedge, removed that which parted it, and enlarged and adorned it with new designs. You see to the right and left of the walk which leads to it two spaces filled with a confused mixture of grass, straw, and all sorts of plants. She orders them every year to be sown with corn, millet, turnsol, hemp-seed, vetch, and, in general, all sorts of grain which birds are fond of, and nothing is ever reaped. Besides this, almost every day she or I bring them something to eat, and when we neglect, Fanny supplies our place. They are supplied with water, as you see, very easily. Mrs. Wolmar carries her attention so far as to provide for them, every spring, little heaps of hair, straw, wool, moss, and other materials proper to build their nests. Thus, by their having materials at hand, provisions in abundance, and by the great care we take

to secure them from their enemies*, the uninterrupted tranquillity they enjoy induces them to lay their eggs in this convenient place, where they want for nothing, and where nobody disturbs them. Thus the habitation of the fathers becomes the abode of the children, and the colony thrives and multiplies."

" Ah ! (said Eloisa) do you see nothing more ? No one thinks beyond himself ; but the affection of a constant pair, the zeal of their domestic concerns, paternal and maternal fondness, all this is lost upon you. Had you been here two months ago, you might have feasted your eyes with the most lovely sight, and have gratified your feelings with the most tender sensations in nature."—

" Madam (said I, somewhat gravely) you are a wife and a mother ; these are pleasures of which it becomes you to be susceptible." M. Wolmar then taking me cordially by the hand, said, " You have friends, and those friends have children ; how can you be a stranger to paternal affection ?" I looked at him, I looked at Eloisa, they looked at each other, and cast such an affecting eye upon me, that embracing them alternately, I said, with tender emotion, " They are as dear to me as to yourself." I do not know by what strange effect a single word can make such an alteration in our minds, but since that moment

* The mice, owls, hawks, and, above all, children.

M. Wolmar appears to me quite another man, and I consider him less in the light of a husband to her whom I have so long adored, as in that of the father of two children for whom I would lay down my life.

I was going to walk around the basin, in order to draw nearer to this delightful asylum, and its little inhabitants, but Mrs. Wolmar checked me. "Nobody (says she) goes to disturb them in their dwelling, and you are the first of our guests whom I ever brought so far. There are four keys to this orchard, of which my father and me have each of us one: Fanny has the fourth, as superintendant, and to bring the children here now and then; the value of which favour is greatly enhanced by the extreme circumspection which is required of them while they are here. Even Gustin never comes hither without one of the four: when the two spring months are over, in which his labours are useful, he scarce ever comes hither afterwards, and all the rest we do ourselves. "Thus (said I), for fear of making your birds slaves to you, you make yourselves slaves to your birds."—"This (she replied) is exactly the sentiment of a tyrant, who never thinks that he enjoys liberty, but while he is disturbing the freedom of others."

As we were coming back, M. Wolmar threw a handful of barley into the basin, and on looking into it, I perceived some little fish. "Ah, ah

(said I, immediately) here are some prisoners nevertheless.—“ Yes, (said he) they are prisoners of war, who have had their lives spared.”——
 “ Without doubt (added his wife). Some time since, Fanny stole two perch out of the kitchen, and brought them hither without my knowledge. I leave them here, for fear of offending her if I sent them to the lake; for it is better to confine the fish in too narrow a compass, than to disoblige a worthy creature.”——“ You are in the right (said I), and the fish are not much to be pitied for having escaped from the frying-pan into the water.”

“ Well, how does it appear to you? (said she, as we were coming back) are you got to the end of the world yet?—“ No (I replied), I am quite out of the world, and you have in truth transported me into Elysium.”——The pompous name she has given this orchard (said M. Wolmar) very well deserves that raillery. Be modest in your commendation of childish amusements, and be assured that they have never entrenched on the concerns of a mistress of a family.”——“ I know it, I am sure of it (I replied); and childish amusements please me more in this way, than the labours of men.”

“ Still there is one thing here (I continued) which I cannot conceive, which is, that though a place so different from what it was can never

have been altered to its present state but by great care and culture, yet I can no where discover the least trace of cultivation. Every thing is verdant, fresh, and vigorous, and the hand of the gardener is no where to be discerned : nothing contradicts the idea of a desert island, which struck me at my first entrance, and I cannot perceive any footsteps of men.”—“ O (said M. Wolmar), it is because they have taken great pains to efface them. I have been frequently witness to, and sometimes an accomplice in this roguery. They sow all the cultivated spots with grass, which presently hides all appearance of culture. In the winter, they cover all the dry and barren spots with some lays of manure; the manure eats up the moss, revives the grass and the plants; the trees themselves do not fare the worse, and in the summer there is nothing of it to be seen. With regard to the moss which covers some of the walks, Lord B—— sent us the secret of making it grow from England. These two sides (he continued) were enclosed with walls; the walls have been covered, not with hedges, but with thick trees, which make the boundaries of the place appear like the beginning of a wood. The two other sides are secured by strong thickset hedges, well stocked with maple, hawthorne, holy-oak, privet, and other small trees, which destroy the appearance of the hedges, and make them look more like coppice woods. You see nothing here in an exact row, nothing level; the line never entered

this place ; nature plants nothing by the line ; the affected irregularity of the winding walks is managed with art, in order to prolong the walk, to hide the boundaries of the island, and to enlarge its extent in appearance, without making inconvenient and too frequent turnings*."

Upon considering the whole, I thought it somewhat extraordinary that they should take so much pains to conceal the labour they had been at ; would it not have been better to have taken no such pains?" Notwithstanding all we have told you (replied Eloisa), you judge of the labour from its effect, and you deceive yourself. All that you see are wild and vigorous plants, which need only to be put into the earth, and which afterwards spring up of themselves. Besides, nature seems desirous of hiding her real charms from the sight of men, because they are too little sensible of them, and disfigure them when they are within their reach ; she flies from public places ; it is in the tops of mountains, in the midst of forests, in desert islands, that she displays her most affecting charms. They who are in love with her, and cannot go so far in pursuit of her, are forced to do her violence, by obliging her, in some measure, to come and dwell with them, and all this cannot be effected without some degree of illusion."

* Like those fashionable little woods, so ridiculously twisted, that you are obliged to walk in a zigzag manner, and to make a *pirouette* at every step.

At these words, I was struck with an idea which made them laugh. "I am supposing to myself (said I) some rich man to be master of this house, and to bring an architect who is paid an extravagant price for spoiling nature. With what disdain would he enter this plain and simple spot! With what contempt would he order these ragged plants to be torn up! What fine lines he would draw.—What fine walks he would cut!—What fine geese-feet, what fine trees in the shape of umbrellas and fans he would make! What fine arbour-work—nicely cut out! What beautiful grass-plats of fine English turf, round, square, sloping, oval! What fine yew-trees cut in the shape of dragons, pagods, marmosets, and all sorts of monsters! With what fine vases of brass, with what fine fruit in stone he would decorate his garden*!"—"When he had done all this (said M. Wolmar), he would have made a very fine place, which would scarce ever be frequented, and from whence one should always go with eagerness to enjoy the country; a dismal place, where nobody would walk, but only use it as a thoroughfare when they were setting out; whereas, in my rural-rambles, I often make haste to return, that I may walk here.

* I am persuaded, that some time hence gardens will be furnished with nothing belonging to the country; neither plants nor trees will be suffered to grow in them: we shall see nothing but China flowers, baboons, arbour-work, gravel of all colours, and fine vases with nothing in them.

“ I see nothing in those extensive grounds so lavishly ornamented, but the vanity of the proprietor and of the artist, who being eager to display, the one his riches and the other his talents, only contribute, at a vast expence, to tire those who would enjoy their works. A false taste of grandeur, which was never designed for man, poisons all his pleasures. An air of greatness has always something melancholy in it; it leads us to consider the wretchedness of those who affect it. In the midst of these grass plats and fine walks, the little individual does not grow greater; a tree twenty feet high will shelter him as well as one of sixty*; he never occupies a space of more than three feet, and in the midst of his immense possessions is lost like a poor worm.

“ There is another taste directly opposite to this, and still more ridiculous, because it does not allow us the pleasure of walking, for which gar-

* He might have enlarged on the bad taste of lopping trees in such a ridiculous manner, to make them shoot into the clouds, by taking off their fine tops, by draining the sap, and preventing their thriving. This method, it is true, supplies the gardeners with wood, but it robs the kingdom of it, which is not overstocked already. One would imagine that nature was different in France from what it is in any other part of the world, they take so much pains to disfigure her. The parks are planted with nothing but long poles; they are like so many forests of masts, and you walk in the midst of woods without finding any shelter.

dens were intended.”—“ I understand you (said I); you allude to those petty virtuosi, who die away at the sight of a ranuncula, and fall prostrate before a tulip.” Hereupon, my Lord, I gave them an account of what happened to me formerly at London, in the flower-garden into which we were introduced with so much ceremony, and where we saw all the treasures of Holland displayed with so much lustre upon four beds of dung. I did not forget the ceremony of the umbrella and the little rod with which they honoured me, unworthy as I was, as well as the rest of the spectators. I modestly acknowledged how, by endeavouring to appear a virtuoso in my turn, and venturing to fall in ecstasies at the sight of a tulip which seemed to be of a fine shape, and of a lively colour, I was mocked, hooted at, and hissed by all the connoisseurs, and how the florist, who despised the flower, despised its panegyrist likewise to that degree, that he did not even deign to look at me all the time we were together. I added, that I supposed he highly regretted having prostituted his rod and umbrella on one so unworthy.”

“ This taste (said M. Wolmar) when it degenerates into a passion, has something idle and little in it, which renders it puerile, and ridiculously expensive. The other, at least, is noble, grand, and has something real in it. But what is the value of a curious root, which an insect

gnaws or spoils perhaps as soon as it is purchased, or of a flower which is beautiful at noon-day, and fades before sun-set ; what signifies a mere imaginary beauty, which is only obvious to the eyes of virtuosi, and which is a beauty only because they will have it to be so ? The time will come when they will require different kinds of beauty in flowers from that which they seek after at present, and with as good reason ; then you will be the connoisseur in your turn, and your virtuoso will appear ignorant. All these trifling attentions, which degenerate into a kind of study, are unbecoming a rational being, who would keep his body in moderate exercise, or relieve his mind by amusing himself in a walk with his friends. Flowers were made to delight our eyes as we pass along, and not to be so curiously anatomized*. See the queen of them shine in every part of the orchard. It perfumes the air, it ravishes the eyes, and costs neither care nor culture. It is for this reason that florists despise it ; nature has made it so lovely, that they cannot add to it any borrowed beauty, and as they cannot plague themselves with cultivating it, they find

* The sagacious Wolmar had not sufficiently reflected. Was he, who was so skilful in judging of men, so bad a judge of nature ? Did he not know that if the Author of Nature displays his greatness in great things, he appears still greater in those which are the least ?

nothing in it which flatters their fancy. The mistake of your pretenders to taste, is that they are desirous of introducing art in every thing, and are never satisfied unless the art appears; whereas true taste consists in concealing it, especially when it concerns any of the works of nature. To what purpose are those straight gravel walks which we meet with continually; and those stars which are so far from making a park appear more extensive to the view, as is commonly supposed, that they only contribute awkwardly to discover its boundaries? Do you ever see fine gravel in woods, or is that kind of gravel softer to the feet than moss or down? Does nature constantly make use of the square or rule? Are they afraid lest she should be visible in some spots, notwithstanding all their care to disfigure her? Upon the whole, it is droll enough to see them affect to walk in a straight line, that they may sooner reach the end, as if they were tired of walking before they have well begun? Would not one imagine, by their taking the shortest cut, that they were going a journey instead of a walk, and that they were in a hurry to get out as soon as they come in?

“How will a man of taste act, who lives to relish life, who knows how to enjoy himself, who pursues real and simple pleasures, and who is inclined to make a walk before his house? He will make it so convenient and agreeable, that he may

enjoy it every hour of the day, and yet so natural and simple, that it will seem as if he had done nothing. He will introduce water, and will make the walk verdant, cool, and shady; for nature herself unites these properties. He will bestow no attention on symmetry, which is the bane of nature and variety, and the walks of gardens in general are so like each other, that we always fancy ourselves in the same. He will make the ground smooth, in order to walk more conveniently; but the two sides of his walks will not be exactly parallel; their direction will not always be recti-lineal; they will be somewhat irregular, like the steps of an indolent man, who saunters in his walk: he will not be anxious about opening distant perspectives. The taste for perspective and distant views proceeds from the disposition of men in general, who are never satisfied with the place where they are. They are always desirous of what is distant from them, and the artist who cannot make them contented with the objects around them, flies to this resource to amuse them; but such a man as I speak of is under no such inquietudes, and when he is agreeably fixed, he does not desire to be elsewhere. Here, for example, we have no prospect, and we are very well satisfied without any. We are willing to think that all the charms of nature are enclosed here, and I should be very

much afraid lest a distant view should take off a good deal of the beauty from this walk*. Certainly, he who would not choose to pass his days in this simple and pleasant place is not master of true taste, or of a vigorous mind. I confess that one ought not to make a parade of bringing strangers hither; but then we can enjoy it ourselves, without showing it to any one."

"Sir (said I) those rich people who have such fine gardens have very good reasons for not choosing to walk alone, or to be in company with themselves only; therefore, they are in the right to lay them out for the pleasure of others. Besides, I have seen gardens in China, made after

* I do not know whether there has ever been an attempt to give a slight curve to these long walks, that the eye may not be able to reach the end of the walk, and that the opposite extremity may be hid from the spectator. It is true, the beauty of the prospects in perspective would be lost by these means; but proprietors would reap one advantage which they generally prize at a high rate, which is that of making their grounds more extensive in appearance; and, in the midst of a starry plot thus bounded, one might think himself in a vast park. I am persuaded that the walk would be less tiresome, though more solitary; for, whatever gives play to the imagination, excites ideas, and nourishes the mind: but gardeners are people who have no idea of these things. How often, in a rural spot, would the pencil drop from their hands, as it did from Le Nôtre's in St. James's Park, if they knew like him what gave life to nature, and interested the beholder!

your taste, and laid out with so much art, that the art was not seen; but in such a costly manner, and kept up at such a vast expence, that that single idea destroyed all the pleasure I had in viewing them. There were rocks, grottos, and artificial cascades, in level and sandy places, where there was nothing but spring-water; there were flowers and curious plants of all the climates in China and Tartary, collected and cultivated in the same soil. It is true, there were no fine walks or regular compartments; but you might see curiosities heaped together with profusion, which in nature are only to be found separate and scattered. Nature was there represented under a thousand various forms, and yet the whole taken together was not natural. Here neither earth nor stone are transplanted; you have neither pumps nor reservoirs; you have no occasion for green-houses, or stoves, or bell-glasses, or straw-beds. A plain spot of ground has been improved by a few simple ornaments. A few common herbs and trees, and a few purling streams, which flow without pomp or constraint, have contributed to embellish it. It is an amusement which has cost little trouble, and the simplicity of it is an additional pleasure to the beholder. I can conceive that this place might be made still more agreeable, and yet be infinitely less pleasing to me. Such, for example, is Lord Cobham's celebrated park at Stowe.

It consists of places extremely beautiful and picturesque, modelled after the fashion of different countries, and in which every thing appears natural except their conjunction, as in the gardens of China, which I just now mentioned. The proprietor who made this stately solitude has even erected ruins, temples, old buildings; and different ages, as well as different places, are collected with more than mortal magnificence. This is the very thing I dislike. I would have the amusements of mankind carry an air of ease with them which does not put one in mind of their weakness, and that while we admire these curiosities, our imagination may not be disturbed by reflecting on the vast sums of money and labour they have cost. Are we not destined to trouble enough, without making our amusements a fatigue?

“I have but one objection (added I, looking at Eloisa) to make to your Elisium, but which you will probably think of some weight, which is, that it is a superfluous amusement. To what purpose was it to make a new walk, when you have such beautiful groves on the other side of the house, which you neglect?”—“That is true (said she) somewhat disconcerted, but I like this better.”—“If you had thoroughly reflected on the propriety of your question before you had made it (said M. Wolmar, interrupting us) it might be imputed to you as more than an indis-

cretion, My wife has never set her foot in those groves since she has been married. I know the reason, though she has always kept it a secret from me. You, who are no stranger to it, learn to respect the spot where you are; it has been planted by the hands of virtue."

I had scarce received this just reprimand, when the little family, led by Fanny, came in as we were going out. These three lovely children ran and embraced their parents; I likewise shared their little caresses. Eloisa and I returned into Elysium, to take a little turn with them; and afterwards went to join M. Wolmar, who was talking to some workmen. In our way, she told me, that she no sooner became a mother, than an idea struck into her mind, with respect to that walk, which increased her zeal for embellishing it." I had an eye (said she) to the health and amusement of my children as they grew up. It requires more care than labour to keep up this place; it is more essential to give a certain turn to the branches of the plants, than to dig and cultivate the ground: I intend one day to make gardeners of my little ones: they shall have sufficient exercise to strengthen their constitution, and not enough to enfeeble it. Besides, what is too much for their age shall be done by others, and they shall confine themselves to such little works as may amuse them. I cannot describe (says she) what pleasure I enjoy in imagining my infants

busy in returning those little attentions which I now bestow on them with such satisfaction, and the joy of which their tender hearts will be susceptible, when they see their mother walking with delight under the shades which have been formed by their own hands. In truth, my friend (said she) with an affecting tone, time thus spent is an emblem of the felicity of the next world, and it was not without reason, that, reflecting on these scenes, I christened this place before-hand by the name of Elysium." My Lord, this incomparable woman is as amiable in the character of a mother as in that of a wife, a friend, a daughter; and to the eternal punishment of my soul, she was thus lovely when my mistress.

Transported with this delightful place, I entreated them in the evening to consent that, during my stay, Fanny should entrust me with her key, and consign to me the office of feeding the birds. Eloisa immediately sent a sack of grain to my chamber, and gave me her own key. I cannot tell for what reason, but I accepted it with a kind of concern, and it seemed as if M. Wolmar's would have been more acceptable to me.

In the morning, I rose early, and with all the eagerness of a child, went to lock myself in the desert island. What agreeable ideas did I hope to carry with me into that solitary place, where the mild aspect of nature alone was sufficient to banish from my remembrance all that new coined system

which had made me so miserable ! All the objects around me will be the work of her whom I adored. In every thing about me I shall behold her image ; I shall see nothing which her hand has not touched ; I shall kiss the flowers which have been her carpet ; I shall inhale, with the morning dew, the air which she has breathed ; the taste she has displayed in her amusements will bring all her charms present to my imagination, and in every thing she will appear the Eloisa of my soul.

As I entered Elysium with this temper of mind, I suddenly recollected the last word which M. Wolmar said to me yesterday very near the same spot. The recollection of that single word instantly changed my whole frame of mind. I thought that I beheld the image of virtue, where I expected to find that of pleasure. That image intruded on my imagination with the charms of Mrs. Wolmar, and for the first time since my return, I saw Eloisa in her absence ; not such as she appeared to me formerly, and as I still love to represent her, but such as she appears to my eyes every day. My lord, I imagined that I beheld that amiable, that chaste, that virtuous woman, in the midst of the train which surrounded her yesterday. I saw those three lovely children, those honourable and precious pledges of conjugal union and tender friendship, play about her, and give and receive a thousand affecting embraces.

At her side I beheld the grave Wolmar, that husband so beloved, so happy, and so worthy of felicity. I imagined that I could perceive his judicious and penetrating eye pierce to the very bottom of my soul, and make me blush again; I fancied that I heard him utter reproaches which I too well deserved, and repeat lectures which I had attended in vain. Last in her train I saw Fanny Regnard, a lively instance of the triumph of virtue and humanity over the most ardent passion. Ah! what guilty thought could reach so far as her, through such an impervious guard! With what indignation I suppressed the shameful transports of a criminal, and scarce extinguished passion; and how I should have despised myself had I contaminated such a ravishing scene of honour and innocence with a single sigh. I recalled to mind the reflections she made as we were going out; then my imagination attending her into that futurity on which she delights to contemplate, I saw that affectionate mother wipe the sweat from her children's foreheads, kiss their ruddy cheeks, and devote that heart, which was formed for love, to the most tender sentiments of nature. There was nothing, even to the very name of Elysium, but what contributed to rectify my rambling imagination, and to inspire my soul with a calm far preferable to the agitation of the most seductive passions. The word Elysium seemed

to me an emblem of the purity of her mind who adopted it; and I concluded that she would never have made choice of that name, had she been tormented with a troubled conscience. "Peace (said I), reigns in the inmost recesses of her soul, as in this asylum which she has named."

I proposed to myself an agreeable reverie, and my reflections there were more agreeable even than I expected. I passed two hours in Elysium, which were not inferior to any time I ever spent. In observing with what rapidity and delight they passed away, I perceived that there was a kind of felicity in meditating on honest reflections, which the wicked never know, and which consists in being pleased with one's self. If we were to reflect on this without prejudice, I do not know any other pleasure can equal it. I perceive, at least, that one who loves solitude, as I do, ought to be extremely cautious not to do any thing which may make it tormenting. Perhaps these principles may lead us to discover the spring of the false judgment of mankind with regard to vice and virtue; for the enjoyment of virtue is all internal, and is only perceived by him who feels it: but all the advantages of vice strike the imagination of other, and only he who has purchased them knows what they cost.

*Se a ciascun l' interno affanno
 Si legesse in fronte scritto,
 Quanti mai, che invidia fanno
 Ci farebberro pietà * ?*

The aching heart and smiling face
 Thus may our envy move,
 Which, did we know the wretched's case,
 Would our compassion prove.

As it grew late before I perceived it, M. Wolmar came to join me, and acquaint me that Eloisa and the tea waited for me. "It is you yourselves (said I, making an apology) who prevented my coming sooner: I was so delighted with the evening I spent yesterday, that I went thither again to enjoy this morning; luckily there is no harm done, and as you have waited for me, my morning is not lost."—"That is true (said M. Wolmar); it would be better to wait till noon, than lose the pleasure of breakfasting together. Strangers are never admitted into my

* He might have added the conclusion, which is very fine, and as apposite to the subject.

*Si vedria che i lor nemici
 Anno in seno, e si reduce
 Nel parere a noi felici
 Ogni lor felicità.*

So when, reduc'd or bent with years,
 Poor mortals sigh for rest,
 Each, wretched as he yet appears,
 With something still is blest.

room in the morning, but breakfast in their own. Breakfast is the repast of intimates, servants are excluded, and impertinents never appear at that time; we then declare all we think, we reveal all our secrets, we disguise none of our sentiments; we can then enjoy the delights of intimacy and confidence, without indiscretion. It is almost the only time in which we are allowed to appear what we really are: why cannot it last the day through!"—Ah Eloisa! (I was ready to say) this is an interesting wish! but I was silent. The first thing I learnt to suppress with my love, was flattery. To praise people to their face is but to tax them with vanity. You know, my lord, whether Mrs. Wolmar deserves this reproach. No; I respect her too much, not to respect her silence. Is it not a sufficient commendation of her, to listen to her, and observe her conduct?

LETTER CXXXI.

FROM MRS. WOLMAR TO MRS. ORBE.

IT is decreed, my dear friend, that you are on all occasions to be my protectress against myself, and that after having delivered me from the snares which my affections laid for me, you are yet to rescue me from those which reason spreads to entrap me. After so many cruel instances, I

have learned to guard against mistakes, as much as against my passions, which are frequently the cause of them. Why had I not the same precaution always! If in time past I had relied less on the light of my own understanding, I should have had less reason to blush at my sentiments.

Do not be alarmed at this preamble. I should be unworthy your friendship, if I was still under a necessity of consulting you upon dismal subjects. Guilt was always a stranger to my heart, and I dare believe it to be more distant from me now than ever. Therefore, Clara, attend to me patiently, and believe that I shall never need your advice in difficulties which honour alone can resolve.

During these six years which I have lived with M. Wolmar in the most perfect union which can subsist between a married couple, you know that he never talked to me either about his family, or himself, and that having received him from a father as solicitous for his daughter's happiness as jealous of the honour of his family, I never expressed any eagerness to know more of his concerns than he thought proper to communicate. Satisfied with being indebted to him for my honour, my repose, my reason, my children, and all that can render me estimable in my own eyes, besides the life of him who gave me being, I was convinced that the particulars concerning him, to which I was a stranger, would not falsify what

I knew of him, and there was no occasion for my knowing more, in order to love, esteem, and honour him, as much as possible.

This morning at breakfast he proposed our taking a little walk before the heat of the day came on; then, under a pretence of not going through the country in a morning dishabille, as he said, he led us into the woods, and exactly into that wood where all the misfortunes of my life commenced. As I approached that fatal spot, I felt a violent palpitation of heart, and should have refused to have gone in, if shame had not checked me, and if the recollection of a word which dropped the other day in Elysium had not made me dread the interpretations which might have been passed on such a refusal. I do not know whether the philosopher was more composed; but some time after, having cast my eyes upon him by chance, I found his countenance pale and altered, and I cannot express to you the uneasiness it gave me.

On entering into the wood, I perceived my husband cast a glance towards me, and smile. He sat down between us, and after a moment's pause, taking us both by the hand, "My dear children (said he) I begin to perceive that my schemes will not be fruitless, and that we three may be connected by a lasting attachment, capable of promoting our common good, and procuring me some comfort to alleviate the trou-

bles of approaching old age : but I am better acquainted with you two than you are with me ; it is but just to make every thing equal among us, and though I have nothing very interesting to impart, yet as you have no secrets hidden from me, I will have none concealed from you."

He then revealed to us the mystery of his birth, which had hitherto been known to no one but my father. When you are acquainted with it, you will imagine what great temper and moderation a man must be master of, who was able to conceal such a secret from his wife during six years ; but it is no pain to him to keep such a secret, and he thinks too slightly of it, to be obliged to exert any vast efforts to conceal it.

"I will not detain you (said he) with relating the occurrences of my life. It is of less importance to you to be acquainted with my adventures than with my character. The former are simple in their nature like the latter ; and when you know what I am, you will easily imagine what I was capable of doing. My mind is naturally calm, and my affections temperate. I am one of those men whom people think they reproach when they call them insensible ; that is, when they upbraid them with having no passion which may impel them to swerve from the true direction of human nature. Being but little susceptible of pleasure or grief, I

receive but faint impressions from those interesting sentiments of humanity, which make the affections of others our own. If I feel uneasiness when I see the worthy in distress, it is not without reason that my compassion is moved, for when I see the wicked suffer, I have no pity for them. My only active principle is a natural love of order, and the concurrence of the accidents of fortune, with the conduct of mankind well combined together, pleases me exactly like beautiful symmetry in a picture, or like a piece well represented on the stage. If I have any ruling passion, it is that of observation : I love to read the hearts of mankind. As my own seldom misleads me, as I make my observations with a disinterested and dispassionate temper, and as I have acquired some sagacity by long experience, I am seldom deceived in my judgment ; this advantage, therefore, is the only recompence which self-love receives from my constant studies : for I am not fond of acting a part, but only of observing others. Society is agreeable to me for the sake of contemplation, and not as a member of it. If I could alter the nature of my being, and become a living eye, I would willingly make the exchange. Therefore, my indifference about mankind does not make me independent of them ; without being solicitous to be seen, I want to see them, and though they are not dear to me, they are necessary.

“ The two first characters in society which I had an opportunity of observing, were courtiers and valets; two orders of men who differ more in appearance than fact, but so little worthy of being attended to, and so easily read, that I was tired of them at first sight. By quitting the court, where every thing is presently seen, I secured myself, without knowing it, from the danger which threatened me, and which I should not have escaped. I changed my name, and having a desire to be acquainted with military men, I solicited admission into the service of a foreign prince; it was there that I had the happiness of being useful to your father, who was impelled by despair for having killed his friend, to expose himself rashly and contrary to his duty. The grateful and susceptible heart of a brave officer began then to give me a better opinion of human nature. He attached himself to me with that zealous friendship which it was impossible for me not to return, and from that time we formed connexions which have every day grown stronger. I discovered in this new state of my mind, that interest is not always, as I had supposed, the sole motive which influences human conduct, and that among the crowd of prejudices which are opposite to virtue, there are some likewise which are favourable to it. I found that the general character of mankind was founded on a kind of self-love indifferent in itself, and either good or bad according

to the accidents which modify it, and which depend on customs, laws, rank, fortune, and every circumstance relative to human policy. I, therefore, indulged my inclination, and despising the vain notions of worldly condition, I successively threw myself into all the different situations in life, which might enable me to compare them together, and know one by the other. I perceived, as you have observed in one of your letters (said he to St. Preux) that we see nothing if we rest satisfied with looking on ; that we ought to act ourselves in order to judge of men's actions, and I made myself an actor, to qualify myself for a spectator. We can always lower ourselves with ease ; and I stooped to a variety of situations which no man of my station ever condescended to. I even became a peasant, and when Eloisa made me her gardener, she did not find me such a novice in the business as she might have expected.

“ Besides gaining a thorough knowledge of mankind, which indolent philosophy only attains in appearance, I found another advantage, which I never expected. This was the opportunity it afforded me of improving, by an active life, that love of order I derived from nature, and of acquiring a new relish for virtue, by the pleasure of contributing towards it. This sentiment made me less speculative, attached me somewhat more to myself, and from a natural consequence of this

progress, I perceived that I was alone. Solitude which was always tiresome to me, became hideous and I could not hope to escape it long. Though I did not grow less dispassionate, I found the want of some connexion; the idea of decay, without any one to comfort me, afflicted me by anticipation, and for the first time in my life, I experienced melancholy and uneasiness. I communicated my troubles to the Baron d'Etange. "You must not (said he) grow an old bachelor. I myself, after having lived independent as it were, in a state of matrimony, find that I have a desire of returning to the duties of a husband and a father, and I am going to repose myself in the midst of my family. It depends on yourself to make my family your own, and to supply the place of the son whom I have lost. I have an only daughter to marry; she is not destitute of merit; she has a sensibility of mind, and the love of her duty makes her love every thing relative to it. She is neither a beauty nor a prodigy of understanding; but come and see her, and believe me, that if she does not affect you, no woman will ever make an impression on you." I came, I saw you, Eloisa, and found that your father had reported modestly of you. Your transports, the tears of joy you shed when you embraced him, gave me the first, or rather the only emotion I ever experienced in my life. If the impression was slight, it was the only one I felt, and our sensations are strong only in propor-

tion to those which oppose them. Three years absence made no change in my inclinations. I was no stranger to the state of yours on my return, and on this occasion I must make you a return for the confession which has cost you so dear." Judge, my dear Clara, with what extraordinary surprise I learnt that all my secrets had been discovered to him before our marriage, and that he had wedded me, knowing me to be the property of another.

"This conduct (continued M. Wolmar) was unpardonable. I offended against delicacy; I sinned against prudence; I exposed your honour and my own; I should have been apprehensive of plunging you and myself into irretrievable calamities; but I loved you, and I loved nothing but you. Every thing else was indifferent to me. How is it possible to restrain a passion, be it ever so weak, when it has no counterpoise? This is the inconvenience of calm and dispassionate tempers. Every thing goes right while their insensibility secures them from temptations; but if one happens to touch them, they are conquered as soon as they are attacked, and reason, which governs while she sways alone, has no power to resist the slightest effort. I was tempted but once, and I gave way to it. If the intoxication of any other passion had rendered me wavering, I should have fallen, every false step I took; none but spi-

rited souls are able to struggle and conquer. All great efforts, all sublime actions, are their province; cool reason never achieved any thing illustrious, and we can only triumph over our passions by opposing one against another. When virtue gains the ascendancy she reigns alone, and keeps all in due poise; this forms the true philosopher, who is as much exposed to the assaults of passion as another, but who alone is capable of subduing them by their own force, as a pilot steers through adverse winds.

“ You find that I do not attempt to extenuate my fault; had it been one, I should infallibly have committed it; but I knew you, Eloisa, and was guilty of none when I married you. I perceived that all my prospect of happiness depended on you alone, and that if any one was capable of making you happy, it was myself. I knew that peace and innocence were essential to your mind, that the affection with which it was pre-engaged could not afford them, and that nothing could banish love but the horror of guilt. I saw that your soul laboured under an oppression which it could not shake off but by some new struggle, and that to make you sensible how valuable you still were, was the only way to render you truly estimable.”

“ Your heart was formed for love; I, therefore, slighted the disproportion of age, which excluded me from a right of pretending to that af-

fection, which he who was the object of it could not enjoy, and which it was impossible to obtain for any other. On the contrary, finding my life half spent, and that I had been susceptible but of a single impression, I concluded that it would be lasting, and I pleased myself with the thoughts of preserving it the rest of my days. In all my tedious searches, I found nothing so estimable as yourself; I thought that what you could not effect no one in the world could accomplish; I ventured to rely on your virtue, and I married you. The secrecy you observed did not surprise me: I knew the reason, and from your prudent conduct I guessed how long it would last. From a regard to you, I copied your reserve, and I would not deprive you of the honour of one day making me a confession, which I plainly perceived was at your tongue's end every minute. I have not been deceived in any particular; you have fully answered all I expected from you. When I made choice of a wife, I desired to find in her an amiable, discreet, and happy companion. The first two requisites have been obtained. I hope, my dear, that we shall not be disappointed of the third."

At these words, in spite of all my endeavours not to interrupt him by my tears, I could not forbear throwing myself round his neck, and crying out, "O my dear husband! O thou best and

most amiable of men! tell me what is wanting to complete my happiness, but to promote your felicity, and to be more deserving."—"You are as happy as you can be (said he, interrupting me); you deserve to be so; but it is time to enjoy that felicity in peace, which has hitherto cost you such vast pains. If your fidelity had been all I required, that would have been insured the moment you made me the promise; I wanted, moreover, to make it easy and agreeable to you, and we have both laboured to this end in concert, without communicating our views to each other. Eloisa, we have succeeded better than you imagine, perhaps. The only fault I find in you is, that you do not resume that confidence which you have a right to repose in yourself, and that you undervalue your own worth. Extreme diffidence is as dangerous as excessive confidence. As that rashness which prompts us to attempts beyond our strength renders our power ineffectual, so that timidity which prevents us from relying on ourselves, renders it useless. True prudence consists in being thoroughly acquainted with the measure of our own power, and acting up to it. You have acquired an increase of strength by changing your condition. You are no longer that unfortunate girl who bewailed the weakness she indulged; you are the most virtuous of women; you are bound by no laws but those of honour and duty; and the only fault that can now be im-

puted to you is, that you retain too lively a sense of your former indiscretions. Instead of taking reproachful precautions against yourself, learn to depend upon yourself, and your confidence will increase your strength. Banish that injurious diffidence, and think yourself happy in having made choice of an honest man, at an age which is liable to imposition, and in having entertained a lover formerly, whom you may now enjoy as a friend, even under your husband's eye. I was no sooner made acquainted with your connexions than I judged of you by each other. I perceived what enthusiastic delusion led you astray ; it never operates but on susceptible minds ; it sometimes ruins them, but it is by a charm which has power to seduce them alone. I judged that the same turn of mind which formed your attachment would break it as soon as it became criminal, and that vice might find an entrance, but never take root in such hearts as yours.

" I conceived moreover, that the connexion between you ought not to be broken ; that there were so many laudable circumstances attending your mutual attachment, that it ought rather to be rectified than destroyed ; and that neither of the two could forget the other, without diminishing their own worth. I knew that great struggles only served to inflame strong passions, and if violent efforts exercise the mind, they oc-

casion such torments as by their continuance might subdue it. I took advantage of Eloisa's gentleness to moderate the severity of her reflections. I nourished her friendship for you (said he to St. Preux); I banished all immoderate passion, and I believe that I have preserved you a greater share of her affections than she would have left you had I abandoned her entirely to herself.

"My success encouraged me, and I determined to attempt your cure as I had accomplished hers; for I had an esteem for you, and notwithstanding the prejudices of vice, I have always observed that every good end is to be obtained from susceptible minds, by means of confidence and sincerity. I saw you; you did not deceive me; you will not deceive me; and though you are not yet what you ought to be, I find you more improved than you imagine, and I am better satisfied with you than you are with yourself. I know that my conduct has an extravagant appearance, and is repugnant to the common received principles. But maxims become less general, in proportion as we are better acquainted with the human heart; and Eloisa's husband ought not to act like common men. My dear children (said he, with a tone the more affecting as it came from a dispassionate man), remain what you are, and we shall all be happy. Danger consists chiefly in opinion; be not afraid of yourselves, and you will have nothing to apprehend; only think on the present,

and I will answer for the future. I cannot communicate any thing further to-day, but if my schemes succeed, and my hopes do not betray me, our destiny will be better fulfilled, and you too will be much happier than if you had enjoyed each other."

As we rose, he embraced us, and would have us likewise embrace each other, on that spot—on that very spot where formerly—Clara, O my dear Clara, how dearly have you ever loved me! I made no resistance: Alas! how indiscreet would it have been to have made any! This kiss was nothing like that which rendered the grove terrible to me. I silently congratulated myself, and I found that my heart was more changed than I had hitherto ventured to imagine.

As we were walking towards home, my husband, taking me by the hand, stopped me, and showing me the wood we had just left, he said to me, smiling, "Eloisa, be no longer afraid of this asylum; it has not been lately profaned." You will not believe me, cousin, but I swear that he has some supernatural gift of reading one's inmost thoughts: may Heaven continue it to him!—Having such reason to despise myself, it is certainly to this art that I am indebted for his indulgence.

You do not see yet any occasion I have for your advice; patience, my angel! I am coming

to that point ; but the conversation which I have related was necessary to clear up what follows.

On our return, my husband, who has long been expected at Etange, told me that he proposed going thither to-morrow, that he should see you in his way, and that he should stay there five or six days. Without saying all I thought concerning such an ill-timed journey, I told him, that I imagined the necessity was not so indispensable as to oblige M. Wolmar to leave his guest, whom he had himself invited to his house. "Would you have me (he replied), use ceremony with him, to remind him that he is not at home ? I am like the Valaisans for hospitality. I hope he will find their sincerity here, and allow us to use their freedom." Perceiving that he would not understand me, I took another method, and endeavoured to persuade our guest to take the journey with him. "You will find a spot (said I) which has its beauties, and such as you are fond of ; you will visit my patrimony, and that of my ancestors ; the interest you take in every thing which concerns me, will not allow me to suppose that such a sight can be indifferent to you." My mouth was open to add, that the castle was like that of Lord B——,— who . . . but luckily I had time to bite my tongue. He answered me coolly, that I was in the right, and that he would do as I pleased. But M. Wolmar, who seemed determined to drive me to an extremity, replied, that he should

do what was most agreeable to himself. "Which do you like best, to go or to stay?"—"To stay," (said he, without hesitating). "Well, stay then (rejoined my husband, taking him by the hand): you are a sincere and honest man, and I am well pleased with that declaration." There was no room for much altercation between my husband and me, and in the hearing of this third person. I was silent, but could not conceal my uneasiness so well but my husband perceived it. "What! (said he, with an air of discontent, St. Præx being at a little distance from us) shall I have pleaded your cause against yourself in vain, and will Mrs. Wolmar remain satisfied with a virtue which depends on opportunity? For my part, I am more nice; I will be indebted for the fidelity of my wife to her affection, not to chance; and it is not enough that she is constant, it wounds my delicacy to think that she should doubt her constancy."

At length he took us into his closet, where I was extremely surprised to see him take from a drawer, along with the copies of some of our friend's correspondences, which I delivered to him, the very original letters which I thought I had seen burned by B—— in my mother's room. "Here (said he to me, showing them to us) are the pledges of my security; if they deceive me, it would be a folly to depend on any thing which

concerns human nature. I consign my wife and my honour in charge to her, who, when single and seduced, preferred an act of benevolence to a secure and private rendezvous. I trust Eloisa, now that she is a wife and a mother, to him, who, when he had it in his power to gratify his desires, yet knew how to respect Eloisa when single, and a fond girl. If either of you think so meanly of yourselves, as to suppose that I am in the wrong, say so, and I retract this instant." Cousin, do you think that one could easily venture to make answer to such a speech.

I nevertheless sought an opportunity, in the afternoon, of speaking with my husband in private, and without entering into reasons which I was not at liberty to urge, I only entreated him to put off his journey for two days. My request was granted immediately, and I employ the time in sending you this express, and waiting for your answer, to know how I am to act.

I know that I need but desire my husband not to go at all, and he who never denied me any thing will not refuse me so slight a favour. But I perceive, my dear, that he takes a pleasure in the confidence he reposes in me, and I am afraid of forfeiting some share of his esteem, if he should suppose that I have occasion for more reserve than he allows me. I know, likewise, that I need but speak a word to St. Preux, and that he will accompany my husband without hesitation; but

what will my husband think of the change, and can I take such a step without preserving an air of authority over St. Preux, which might seem to entitle him to some privileges in his turn? Besides, I am afraid; lest he should conclude from this precaution, that I find it absolutely necessary, and this step, which at first sight appears most easy, is the most dangerous perhaps at the bottom. Upon the whole, however, I am not ignorant that no consideration should be put in competition with a real danger; but does this danger exist in fact? This is the very doubt which you must resolve for me.

The more I examine the present state of my mind, the more I find to encourage me. My heart is spotless, my conscience calm; I have no symptoms of fear or uneasiness; and with respect to every thing which passes within me, my sincerity before my husband costs me no trouble. Not but that certain involuntary recollections sometimes occasion tender emotions, from which I had rather be exempt; but these recollections are so far from being produced by the sight of him who was the original cause of them, that they seem to be less frequent since his return; and however agreeable it is to me to see him, yet I know not from what strange humour, it is more agreeable to me to think of him. In a word, I find that I do not even require the aid of virtue, in order to be composed in his presence, and, exclusive of the

horror of guilt, it would be very difficult to revive those sentiments which virtue has extinguished.

But is it sufficient, my dear, that my heart encourages me, when reason ought to alarm me? I have forfeited the right of depending on my own strength. Who will answer that my confidence, even now, is not an illusion of vice? How shall I rely on those sentiments which have so often deceived me? Does not guilt always spring from that pride which prompts us to despise temptation; and when we defy those dangers which have occasioned our fall, does it not show a disposition to yield again to temptation?

Weigh all these circumstances, my dear Clara, you will find that though they may be trifling in themselves, they are of sufficient importance to merit attention, when you consider the object they concern. Deliver me from the uncertainty into which they have thrown me. Show me how I must behave in this critical conjuncture; for my past errors have affected my judgment, and rendered me diffident in deciding upon any thing. Whatever you may think of yourself, your mind, I am certain, is tranquil and composed; objects present themselves to you such as they are; but in mine, which is agitated like a troubled sea, they are confounded and disfigured. I no longer dare to depend upon any thing I see, or any thing I feel, and, notwithstanding so many years re-

penitance, I perceive, with concern, that the weight of past failings is a burden we must bear to the end of our lives.

LETTER CXXII.

ANSWER.

POOR Eloisa! With so much reason to live at ease, what torments you continually create! All thy misfortunes come from thyself, O Israel! If you adhered to your own maxims; if, in point of sentiment, you only hearkened to the voice within you, and your heart did but silence your reason, you would then, without scruple, trust to that security it inspires, and you would not constrain yourself against the testimony of your own heart, to dread a danger which can arise only from thence.

I understand you, I perfectly understand you, Eloisa; being more secure in yourself than you pretend to be, you have a mind to humble yourself on account of your past failings, under a pretence of preventing new ones; and your scruples are not so much precautions against the future, as a penance you impose upon yourself, to atone for the indiscretion which formerly ruined you. You compare the times! do you consider? Compare situations likewise, and remember that I then re-

proved you for your confidence, as I now reprove you for your diffidence.

You are mistaken, my dear; but nature does not alter so soon. If we can forget our situation for want of reflection, we see it in its true light when we take pains to consider it, and we can no more conceal from ourselves our virtues than our vices. Your gentleness and devotion have given you a turn for humility. Mistrust that dangerous virtue, which only excites self-love, by making it centre in one point; and be assured, that the noble sincerity of an upright mind is greatly preferable to the pride of humility. If moderation is necessary in wisdom, it is requisite, likewise, in those precautions it suggests, lest a solicitude which is reproachful to virtue should debase the mind, and, by keeping us in constant alarm, render a chimerical danger a real one. Do not you perceive, that after we have had a fall, we should hold ourselves upright, and that by leaning too much towards the side opposite to that on which we fell, we are in danger of falling again? Cousin, you loved like Eloisa. Now, like her, you are an extravagant devotee; I hope you will be more successful in the latter than you were in the former! In truth, if I was less acquainted with your natural timidity, your apprehensions would be sufficient to terrify me in my turn; and if I were so scrupulous, I might, from being alarmed for you, begin to tremble for myself.

“Consider further, my dear friend; you whose system of morality is as easy and natural as it is pure and honest, do not make constructions which are harsh and foreign to your character, with respect to your maxims concerning the separation of the sexes. I agree with you that they ought not to ~~live~~ together, nor after the same manner; but consider whether this important rule does not admit of many distinctions in point of practice; examine whether it ought to be applied indiscriminately, and without exception, to married as well as to single women, to society in general as well as to particular connections, to business as well as to amusements, and whether that honour and decency which inspire these maxims, ought not sometimes to regulate them? In well governed countries, where the natural relations of things are attended to in matrimony, you would admit of assemblies where young persons of both sexes might see, be acquainted, and associate with each other; but you prohibit them with good reason, from holding any private intercourse. But is not the case quite different with regard to married women and the mothers of families, who can have no interest that is justifiable, in exhibiting themselves in public; who are confined within doors by their domestic concerns, and who should not be refused to do any thing at home which is becoming the mistress of a family? I should not like to see you in the cellars, presenting the wine

for the merchants to taste, nor to see you leave your children to settle accounts with a banker ; but if an honest man should come to visit your husband, or to transact some business with him, will you refuse to entertain his guest in his absence, and to do him the honours of the house, for fear of being left alone with him ? Trace this principle to its source, and it will explain all your maxims. Why do we suppose that women ought to live retired and apart from the men ? Shall we do such injustice to our sex, as to account for it upon principles drawn from our weakness, and that it is only to avoid the danger of temptations ? No, my dear, these unworthy apprehensions do not become an honest woman, and the mother of a family, who is continually surrounded with objects which cherish in her the sentiments of honour, and who is devoted to the most respectable duties of human nature. It is nature herself that divides us from the men, by prescribing to us different occupations ; it is that amiable and timorous modesty, which, without being immediately attentive to chastity, is nevertheless its surest guardian ; it is that cautious and affecting reserve, which at one and the same time cherishing both desire and respect in the hearts of men, serves as a kind of coquetry to virtue. This is the reason why even husbands themselves are not excepted out of this rule. This is the reason why the most discreet women generally maintain the great-

est ascendancy over their husbands; because, by the help of this prudent and discreet reserve, without showing any caprice or non-compliance, they know, even in the embraces of the most tender union, how to keep them at a distance, and prevent their being cloyed with them. You will agree with me that your maxims are too general not to admit of exceptions, and that not being founded on any rigorous duty, the same principle of decorum which established them may sometimes justify our dispensing with them.

The circumspection which you ground on your past failings is injurious to your present condition; I will never pardon this unnecessary caution which your heart dictates, and I can scarce forgive it in your reason. How! was it possible that the rampart which protects your person could not secure you from such ignominious apprehensions? How could my cousin, my sister, my friend, my Eloisa, confound the indiscretions of a girl of too much sensibility, with the infidelity of a guilty wife? Look around you, you will see nothing but what contributes to raise and support your mind. Your husband, who has such confidence in you, and whose esteem it becomes you to justify; your children, whom you would train to virtue, and who will one day deem it an honour that you was their mother; your venerable father, who is so dear to you, who enjoys your felicity, and who derives more lustre from you

than from his ancestors; your friend, whose fate depends on your's, and to whom you must be accountable for a reformation to which she has contributed; her daughter, to whom you ought to set an example of those virtues which you would excite in her; your philosopher, who is an hundred times fonder of your virtues than of your person, and who respects you still more than you apprehend; lastly, yourself, who are sensible what painful efforts your discretion has cost you, and who will surely never forfeit the fruit of so much trouble in a single moment; how many motives capable of inspiring you with courage conspire to make you ashamed of having ventured to mistrust yourself! But, in order to answer for my Eloisa, what occasion have I to consider what she is? It is enough that I know what she was, during the indiscretions which she bewails. Ah! if your heart had ever been capable of infidelity, I would allow you to be continually apprehensive: but at the very time when you imagined that you viewed it at a distance, you may conceive the horror its real existence would have occasioned you, by what you felt at that time, when but to imagine it had been to have committed it.

I recollect with what astonishment we learnt that there was a nation where the weakness of a fond maid is considered as an inexpiable crime, though the adultery of a married woman is there softened by the gentle term of gallantry, and

where married women publickly make themselves amends for the short-lived restraint they undergo when single. I know what maxims, in this respect, prevail in high life, where virtue passes for nothing, where every thing is empty appearance, where crimes are effaced by the difficulty of proving them, or where the proof itself becomes ridiculous against custom. But you, Eloisa, you who glowed with a pure and constant passion, who was guilty only in the eyes of men, and between heaven and earth was open to no reproach! You, who made yourself respected in the midst of your indiscretions; you, who being abandoned to fruitless regret, obliged us even to adore those virtues which you had forfeited; you, who disdained to endure self-contempt, when every thing seemed to plead in your excuse, can you be apprehensive of guilt, after having paid so dearly for your weakness? Will you dare to be afraid that you have less power now than you had in those days which cost you so many tears? No, my dear, so far from being alarmed at your former indiscretions, they ought to inspire you with courage; so severe a repentance does not lead to remorse, and whoever is so susceptible of shame, will never bid defiance to infamy.

If ever a weak mind had supports against its weakness, they are such as uphold you; if ever a vigorous mind was capable of supporting itself, what prop can your's require? Tell me, what

reasonable grounds there can be for your apprehensions? All your life has been a continual struggle, in which, even after your defeat, honour and duty never ceased opposition, and at length came off victorious. Ah! Eloisa! shall I believe that, after so much pain and torment, after twelve years passed in tears, and six spent gloriously, that you still dread a trial of eight days? In few words, deal sincerely with yourself; if there be really any danger, save your person, and blush at the condition of your heart; if there is no danger, it is an offence to your reason, it is a dishonour to your virtue to be apprehensive of perils, which can never affect it. Do you not know that there are some scandalous temptations which never approach noble minds; that it is even shameful to be under a necessity of subduing them, and that to take precautions against them, is not so much to humble, as to debase ourselves?

I do not presume to give you my arguments as unanswerable, but only to convince you that your's may be controverted, and that is sufficient to warrant my advice. Do not depend on yourself, for you do not know how to do yourself justice; nor on me, who even in your indiscretions never considered any thing but your heart, and always adored you; but refer to your husband, who sees you such as you are, and judges of you exactly according to your real worth. Being, like all people of sensibility, ready to judge ill of those who

who appear insensible, I mistrusted his power of penetration, into the secrets of susceptible minds ; but since the arrival of our traveller, I find by his letters that he reads your's perfectly well, and that there is not a single emotion which escapes his observation. I find his remarks so just and acute, that -I have almost changed my opinion to the other extreme ; and I shall readily believe that your dispassionate people, who consult their eyes more than their hearts, judge better of other men's passions than your impetuous, lively, and vain persons like myself, who always begin by supposing themselves in another's place, and can never see any thing but what they feel. However it be, M. Wolmar is thoroughly acquainted with you, he esteems you, he loves you, and his destiny is blended with your's. What does he require, but that you would leave to him the entire direction of your conduct, with which you are afraid to trust yourself? Perhaps, finding old age coming on, he is desirous, by some trials on which he may depend, to prevent those uneasy jealousies, which an old husband generally feels who is married to a young wife ; perhaps the design he has in view requires that you should live in a state of familiarity with your friend, without alarming either your husband or yourself ; perhaps he only means to give you a testimony of confidence and esteem, worthy of that which he entertains for you. You should never oppose

such sentiments, as if the weight of them was too much for you to endure; and for my part, I think that you cannot act more agreeably to the dictates of prudence and modesty, than by relying entirely on his tenderness and understanding.

Could you, without offending M. Wolmar, punish yourself for a vanity you never had, and prevent a danger which no longer exists? Remain alone with the philosopher, use all the superfluous precautions against him which would formerly have been of such service to you; maintain the same reserve as if you still mistrusted your own heart and his, as well as your own virtue. Avoid all pathetic conversation, all tender recollection of times past; break off or prevent long private interviews; be constantly surrounded by your children; do not stay long with him in a room, in Elysium, or in the grove, notwithstanding the profanation. Above all things, use these precautions in so natural a manner, that they may seem to be the effect of chance, and that he may never once suspect that you are afraid of him. You love to go upon the water, but you deprive yourself of the pleasure, on account of your husband, who is afraid of that element, and of your children, whom you do not choose to venture there. Take the advantage of this absence, to entertain yourself with this recreation, and leave your children to the care of Fanny. By this means you may securely devote yourself to the

sweet familiarity of friendship, and quietly enjoy a long *tête-à-tête* under the protection of the waterman, who see without understanding, and from whom we cannot go far without thinking what we are about.

A thought strikes me which many people would laugh at, but which will be agreeable to you, I am sure; that is to keep an exact journal in your husband's absence, to shew him on his return, and to think on this journal, with regard to every circumstance which is to be set down in it. In truth, I do not believe that such an expedient would be of service to many women; but a sincere mind, incapable of deceit, has many resources against vice, which others stand in need of. We ought to despise nothing which tends to preserve a purity of manners, and it is by means of trifling precautions, that great virtues are secured.

Upon the whole, as your husband is to see me in his way, he will tell me, I hope, the true reasons of his journey, and if I do not find them substantial, I will persuade him from proceeding any farther; or, at all events, I will do what he has refused to do: upon this you may depend. In the mean time, I think I have said enough to fortify you against a trial of eight days. Go, Eloisa, I know you too well, not to answer for you as much, nay more than I could for myself. You will always be what you ought to be, and what

you desire to be. If you do but rely on the integrity of your own mind, you will run no risk whatever ; for I have no faith in these unforeseen defects ; it is in vain to disguise voluntary failings by the idle appellation of weaknesses ; no woman was ever yet overcome who had not an inclination to surrender ; and if I thought that such a fate could attend you, believe me, trust to the tenderness of my friendship, rely on all the sentiments which would arise in the heart of your poor Clara, I should be too sensibly interested in your protection, to abandon you entirely to yourself.

As to what M. Wolmar declared to you, concerning the intelligence he received before your marriage, I am not much surprised at it ; you know I always suspected it ; and I will tell you, moreover, that my suspicions are not confined to the indiscretions of B—. I could never suppose that a man of truth and integrity like your father, and who had some suspicions at least himself, would resolve to impose upon his son-in-law and his friend. If he engaged you so strictly to secrecy, it was because the mode of discovery would come from him in a very different manner to what it would have proceeded from you ; and because he was willing, no doubt, to give it a turn less likely to disgust M. Wolmar, than that which he very well knew you would not fail to give it yourself. But I must dismiss your mes-

senger; we will chat about these matters more at our leisure about a month hence.

Farewell, my dearest cousin, I have preached long enough to the preacher; resume your old occupation—I find myself quite uneasy that I cannot be with you yet. I disorder all my affairs, by hurrying to dispatch them, and I scarce know what to do. Ah, Chaillot, Chailliot, . . . If I was less giddy . . . but I always hope that I shall——

P. S.—Apropos; I forgot to make my compliments to your highness. Tell me, I beseech you, is the gentleman your husband Atteman, Knes, or Boyard*? O poor child! You, who have so often lamented being born a gentlewoman, are very fortunate to become the wife of a Prince! Between ourselves, nevertheless, you discover apprehensions which are somewhat vulgar for a woman of such high quality. Do not you know, that little scruples belong to mean people; and that a child of a good family, who should pretend to be his father's son, would be laughed at!

* Mrs. Oibe was ignorant, however, that the first two names are titles of distinction, in-Russia; but Boyard is only that of a private gentleman.

LETTER CXXXIII.

M. WOLMAR TO MRS. ORBE.

I AM going to Etange, my sweet cousin, and I proposed to call upon you in my way ; but a delay, of which you are the cause, obliges me to make more haste, and I had rather lie at Lausanne as I come back, that I may pass a few hours the more with you. Besides, I want to consult you with regard to many particulars, which it is proper to communicate beforehand, that you may have time to consider them before you give me your opinion.

I would not explain my scheme to you in relation to the young man, till his presence had confirmed the good opinion I had conceived of him. I think I may now depend upon him sufficiently to acquaint you, between ourselves, that my design is to intrust him with the education of my children. I am not ignorant that these important concerns are the principal duty of a parent ; but when it will be time to exert them, I shall be too old to discharge them, and being naturally calm and speculative by constitution, I should never have been sufficiently active to govern the spirit of youth. Besides, for a reason you know*,

* The reader is not yet acquainted with this reason ; but he is desired not to be impatient.

Eloisa would be concerned to see me assume an office, in which I should never acquit myself to her liking. I have a thousand reasons besides; your sex is not equal to these duties; their mother shall confine herself to the education of her Harriet; to your share I allot the management of the household upon the plan already established, and of which you approve; and it shall be my business to behold three worthy people concurring to promote the happiness of the family, and to enjoy that repose in my old age, for which I shall be indebted to their labours.

I have always found, that my wife was extremely averse from trusting her children to the care of mercenaries, and I could not discommend her scruples. The respectable capacity of a preceptor requires so many talents which are not to be paid for, so many virtues which have no price set upon them, that it is in vain to think of procuring one by means of money. It is from a man of genius only that we can expect the talents of a preceptor; it is from the heart of an affectionate friend alone that we can hope to meet with the zeal of a parent; and genius is not to be sold any more than attachment.

All the requisite qualities seem to be united in your friend; and if I am well acquainted with his disposition, I do not think he would desire greater happiness, than to make those beloved children

contribute to their mother's felicity. The only obstacle I can foresee is his affection to Lord B——, which will not allow him to disengage himself from so dear a friend, to whom he has such great obligations, at least if his lordship does not require it himself. We expect to see this extraordinary man very soon: and as you have a great ascendancy over him, if he answers the idea you have given me of him, I may commit the business, so far as it relates to him, to your management.

You have now, my dear cousin, the clue of my whole conduct, which, without this explanation, must have appeared very extraordinary, and which, I hope, will hereafter meet with Eloisa's approbation and your's. The advantage of having such a wife as I have, made me try many expedients which would have been impracticable with another. Though I leave her, in full confidence, with her old lover, under no other guard than her own virtue, it would be madness to establish that lover in my family, before I was certain that he ceased to be such; and how could I be assured of it, if I had a wife on whom I had less dependence?

I have often observed you smile at my remarks on love; but now I think I can mortify you. I have made a discovery which neither you or any other woman, with all the subtlety they attribute to your sex, would ever have made; the proof of

which you will nevertheless perceive at first sight, and you will allow it to be equal to demonstration, when I explain to you the principles on which I ground it. Was I to tell you that my young couple are more fond than ever, this undoubtedly would not appear wonderful to you. Was I to assure you, on the contrary, that they are perfectly cured; you know the power of reason and virtue, and therefore you would not look upon that neither as a great miracle: but if I tell you, that both these opposites are true at the same time; that they love each other with more ardour than ever, and that nothing subsists between them but a virtuous attachment; that they are always lovers, and yet never more than friends: this, I imagine, is what you would least expect, what you will have more difficulty to conceive, and what nevertheless precisely corresponds with truth.

This is the riddle, which makes those frequent contradictions, which you must have observed in them, both in their conversation and in their letters. What you wrote to Eloisa concerning the picture, has served more than any thing to explain the mystery, and I find that they are always sincere, even in contradicting themselves continually. When I say they, I speak particularly of the young man; for as to your friend, one can only speak of her by conjecture. A veil of wisdom and honour make so many folds about her

heart, that it is impenetrable to human eyes, even to her own. The only circumstance which leads me to imagine that she has still some distrust to overcome, is, that she is continually considering with herself what she should do if she was perfectly cured; and she examines herself with so much accuracy, that if she was really cured, she would not do it so well.

As to your friend, who, though virtuously inclined, is less apprehensive of his present feelings, I find that he still retains all the affections of his youth; but I perceive them, without having any reason to be offended at them. It is not Eloisa Wolmar he is fond of, but Eloisa Etange; he does not hate me as the possessor of the object I love, but as the ravisher of her whom he doated on. His friend's wife is not his mistress, the mother of two children is not her who was formerly his scholar. It is true, she is very like that person, and often puts him in mind of her. He loves her in the time past. This is the true explanation of the riddle. Deprive him of his memory, and you destroy his love.

This is not an idle subtlety, my pretty cousin, but a solid observation, which, if extended to other affections, may admit of a more general application than one would imagine. I even think that it would not be difficult to explain it by your ideas. At the time you parted the two lovers, their passion was at the highest degree of

Impetuosity. Perhaps, if they had continued much longer together, they would gradually have grown cool; but their imagination, being strongly affected, constantly presented each to the other in the light in which they appeared at the time of their separation. The young man, not perceiving those alterations which the progress of time made in his mistress, loved her such as he had seen her formerly, not such as she was then*. To complete his happiness, it would not have been enough to have given him possession of her, unless she could have been given to him at the same age, and under the same circumstances she was in, when their loves commenced. The least alteration in these particulars would have lessened so much of the felicity he proposed to himself; she is grown handsomer, but she is al-

* You women are very ridiculous to think of rendering such a frivolous and fluctuating passion as that of love consistent. Every thing in nature is changeable, every thing is continually fluctuating, and yet you would inspire a constant passion! And what right have you to pretend that we must love you for ever, because we loved you yesterday? Then preserve the same face, the same age, the same humour; be always the same, and we will always love you, if we can. But when you alter continually, and require us always to love you, it is, in fact, desiring us every minute not to love you; it is not seeking for constant minds, but looking out for such as are as fickle as your own.

tered; her improvement, in that sense, turns to her prejudice; for it is of his former mistress, not of any other, that he is enamoured.

What deceives him, is, that he confounds the times, and often reproaches himself on account of a passion which he thinks present, and which, in fact, is nothing more than the effect of too tender a recollection; but I do not know, whether it will not be better to accomplish his cure, than to undeceive him. Perhaps, in this respect we may reap more advantage from his mistake, than from his better judgment. To discover to him the true state of his affections, would be to apprise him of the death of the object he loved; this might be affliction dangerous to him, inasmuch as a state of melancholy is always favourable to love.

Freed from the scruples which restrain him, he would probably be more inclined to indulge recollections which he ought to stifle; he would converse with less reserve, and the traces of Eloisa are not so effaced in Mrs. Wolmar, but upon examination he might find them again. I have thought, that, instead of undeceiving him with respect to his opinion of the progress he has made, and which encourages him to pursue it to the end, we should rather endeavour to banish the remembrance of those times which he ought to forget, by skilfully substituting other ideas in the room of those he is so fond of. You, who con-

tribute to give them birth, may contribute more than any one to efface them. but I shall wait till we are all together, that I may tell you in your ear what you should do for this purpose; a charge, which, if I am not mistaken, will not be very burdensome to me. In the mean time, I endeavour to make the objects of his dread familiar to him, by presenting them to him in such a manner, that he may no longer think them dangerous. He is impetuous, but tractable, and easily managed. I avail myself of this advantage to give a turn to his imagination. In the room of his mistress, I compel him always to look at the wife of his friend, and the mother of my children; I efface one picture by another, and hide the past with the present. We always ride a startlish horse up to the object which frights him, that he may not be frightened at it again. We should act in the same manner with those young people, whose imaginations are on fire even after their affections are grown cold, and whose fancy presents monsters at a distance, which disappear as they draw near.

I think I am well acquainted with the strength of both, and I do not expose them to a trial which they cannot support: for wisdom does not consist in using all kinds of precautions indiscriminately, but in choosing those which are really useful, and, in neglecting such as are superfluous.

The eight days during which I leave them together will perhaps be sufficient for them to discover the true state of their minds, and to know in what relation they really stand to each other. The oftener they perceive themselves in private with each other, the sooner they will find out their mistake, by comparing their present sensations with those they felt formerly, when they were in the same situation. Besides, it is of importance that they should use themselves to endure, without danger, that state of familiarity in which they must necessarily live together, if my scheme takes place. I find by Eloisa's conduct, that you have given her advice, which she could not refuse taking, without wronging herself. What pleasure I shall take in giving her this proof that I am sensible of her real worth, if she was a woman with whom a husband might make a merit of such confidence ! But, if she gains nothing over her affections, her virtue will still be the same ! it will cost her dearer, and she will not triumph the less. Whereas, if she is still in danger of feeling any inward uneasiness, it can arise only from some moving conversation, which she must be too sensible before-hand will awaken recollection, and which she will therefore always avoid. Thus, you see, you must not in this instance judge of my conduct by common maxims, but from the motives which actuate me, and from

the singular disposition of her towards whom I shall regulate my behaviour.

Farewell, my dear cousin, till my return. Though I have not entered into these explanations with Eloisa, I do not desire you to keep them secret from her. It is a maxim with me, never to make secrets among my friends; therefore, I commit these to your discretion; make such use of them as your prudence and friendship will direct. I know you will do nothing but what is best and most proper.

LETTER CXXXIV.

TO LORD B——.

M. Wolmar set out yesterday for Etange, and you can scarce conceive in what a melancholy state his departure has left me. I think the absence of his wife would not have affected me so much as his. I find myself under greater restraint than even when he is present; a mournful silence takes possession of my heart; its murmurs are stifled by a secret dread: and, being less tormented with desires than apprehensions, I experience all the horrors of guilt, without being exposed to the temptations of it.

Can you imagine, my lord, where my mind gains confidence, and loses these unworthy dreads? In the presence of Mrs. Wolmar. As

soon as I approach her, the sight of her pacifies my inquietude; her looks purify my heart. Such is the ascendancy of hers, that it always seems to inspire others with a sense of her innocence, and to confer that composure which is the effect of it. Unluckily for me, her system of life does not allow her to devote the whole day to the society of her friends; and in those moments which I am obliged to pass out of her company, I should suffer less if I was farther distant from her.

What contributes to feed the melancholy which oppresses me, is a reflection which she made yesterday, after her husband's departure. Though till that moment she kept up her spirits tolerably, yet for a long time her eyes followed him with an air of tenderness, which I then imagined was only occasioned by the departure of that happy husband; but I found, by her conversation, that the emotion was to be imputed to another cause, which was a secret to me. "You see (said she) in what manner we live together, and you may judge whether he is dear to me. Do not imagine, however, that the sentiment which attaches me to him, though as tender and as powerful as that of love, is likewise susceptible of its weakness. If an interruption of the agreeable habit of living together is painful to us, we are consoled by the firm hope of resuming the same habit again. A state of such permanence admits few vicissitudes which we have reason to dread;

and in an absence of a few days, the pain of so short an interval does not affect me so strongly as the pleasure of seeing an end to it. The affliction which you read in my eyes proceeds from a more weighty cause, and though it is relative to M. Wolmar, it is not occasioned by his departure.

“ My dear friend (continued she, with an affecting tone) there is no true happiness on earth. My husband is one of the most worthy and affectionate of men; the duty which incites us is cemented by mutual inclination; he has no desires but mine; I have children which give, and promise pleasure hereafter to their mother; there cannot be a more affectionate, virtuous, and amiable friend than her whom my heart doats on, and with whom I shall pass my days; you yourself contribute to my felicity, by having so well justified my esteem and affection for you; a long and expensive law-suit, which is nearly finished, will soon bring the best of fathers to my arms; every thing prospers with us; peace and order reign throughout the family; our-servants are zealous and faithful; our neighbours express every kind of attachment to us; we enjoy the good will of the public. Blest with every thing which Heaven, fortune, and men can bestow, all things conspire to my happiness. A secret uneasiness, one trouble only, poisons all, and I am not happy.” She uttered these last words with a

figh which pierced my soul, and which I had no share in raising. She is not happy, said I, sighing in my turn, and I am no longer an obstacle to her felicity !

That melancholy thought disordered my ideas in a moment, and disturbed the repose which I began to taste. Unable to endure the intolerable state of doubt into which her conversation had thrown me, I importuned her so eagerly to disclose her whole mind to me, that at length she deposited the fatal secret with me, and allows me to communicate it to you. But this is the hour of recreation ; Mrs. Wolmar is come out of the nursery, to walk with her children ; she has just told me as much. I attend her, my lord—I leave you for the present ; and shall resume in my next the subject I am now obliged to quit.

L E T T E R CXXXV.

MRS. WOLMAR TO HER HUSBAND.

I EXPECT you next Tuesday, according to your appointment, and you will find every thing disposed agreeably to your desire. Call on Mrs. Orbe in your way back ; she will tell you what has passed during your absence ; I had rather you should learn it from her than from me.

I thought, M. Wolmar, I had deserved your

esteem ; but your conduct is not the most prudent, and you sport most cruelly with your wife's virtue.

L E T T E R CXXXVI.

TO LORD B——.

I MUST give you an account, my lord, of a danger we have incurred within these few days, and from whence we are happily delivered at the expence of a little terror and fatigue. This relation very well deserves a letter by itself ; when you read it, you will perceive the motives which engage me to write.

You know that Mrs. Wolmar's house is not far from the lake, and that she is fond of the water. It is three days since her husband's absence has left us without employment ; and the pleasantness of the evening made us form a scheme for one of these parties the next day. Soon as the sun was up we went to the river's side ; we took a boat, with nets for fishing, three rowers, and a servant, and we embarked with some provisions for dinner. I took a fowling-piece, to knock down some pefolets*, but was ashamed to kill birds out of wantonness, and only for the pleasure

* A bird of passage on the lake of Geneva, which is not good to eat.

of doing mischief. I amused myself, therefore, in observing the siflets, the crenets†, and I fired but once at a grebe, at a great distance, which I missed.

We passed an hour or two in fishing within 500 paces of the shore. We had good success, but Eloisa had them all thrown into the water again, except a trout, which had received a blow from the oar. "The animals (said she) are in pain; let us deliver them; let us enjoy the pleasure they will feel on escaping from danger." This operation, however, was performed slowly, and against the grain, not without some representations against it; and I found that our gentry would have had a much better relish for the fish they had ~~caught~~, than for the moral which saved their lives.

We then launched farther into the lake; soon after, with all the vivacity of a young man, which it is time for me to check, undertaking to manage the master oar, I rowed the boat into the middle of the lake, so that we were soon above a league from the shore. Then I explained to Eloisa every part of that superb horizon which environed us. I showed her at a distance the mouth of the Rhone, whose impetuous current stops on a sudden within a quarter of a league as

† Different sorts of birds on the lake of Geneva, and very good to eat.

if it was afraid to fully the crystal azure of the lake with its muddy waters. I made her observe the redans of the mountains, whose correspondent angles running parallel, formed a bed in the space between, fit to receive the river which occupied it. As we got farther from shore, I had great pleasure in making her take notice of the rich and delightful banks of the *Pays de Vaud*, where the vast number of towns, the prodigious throng of people, with the beautiful and verdant hills all around, formed a most ravishing landscape; where every spot of ground, being cultivated and equally fertile, supplies the husbandman, the shepherd, and the vine dresser, with the certain fruits of their labours, which are not devoured by the greedy publican. Afterwards I pointed out *Chablais*, a country not less favoured by nature, and which, nevertheless, affords nothing but a spectacle of wretchedness; I made her perceive the manifest distinction between the different effects of the two governments, with respect to the riches, number, and happiness of the inhabitants. "It is thus (said I) that the earth expands her fruitful bosom, and lavishes treasures among those happy people who cultivate it for themselves. She seems to smile and be enlivened at the sweet aspect of liberty; she loves to nourish mankind. On the contrary, the mournful ruins, the heath and brambles which cover a half desert country, proclaim from afar that it is under the dominion

of an absent proprietor, and that it yields with reluctance a scanty produce to slaves who reap no advantage from it.

While we were agreeably-amusing ourselves with viewing the neighbouring coasts, a gale arising, which drove us allant towards the opposite shore, began to blow very high, and when we thought to tack about, the resistance was so strong, that it was impossible for our slight boat to overcome it. The waves soon began to grow dreadful; we endeavoured to make for the coast of Savoy, and tried to land at the village of Meillerie, which was over against us, and the only place almost where the shore affords a convenient landing. But the wind changing, and blowing stronger, rendered all the endeavours of the watermen ineffectual, and discovered to us a range of steep rocks, somewhat lower, where there was no shelter.

We all tugged at our oars, and at that instant I had the mortification to perceive Eloisa grow sick, and see her weak and fainting at the bottom of the boat. Happily she had been used to the water, and her sickness did not last long. In the mean time our efforts increased with our danger; the heat of the sun, the fatigue, and profuse sweating, took away our breaths, and made us excessively faint. Then summoning all her courage, Eloisa revived our spirits by her compassionate kindness; she wiped the sweat from off our faces;

and mixing some wine and water, for fear of intoxication, she presented it alternately to those who were most exhausted. No, your lovely friend, never appeared with such lustre as at that moment, when the heat and agitation of her spirits gave an additional glow to her complexion; and what greatly improved her charms was, that you might plainly perceive by the tenderness of her behaviour, that her solicitude proceeded less from apprehensions for herself than compassion for us. At one time two planks having started by a shock which dipped us all, she concluded that the boat was split, and in the exclamation of that affectionate mother, I heard these words distinctly: "O my children, must I never see you more!" As for myself, whose imagination always exceeds the danger, though I knew the utmost of our perilous condition, yet I expected every minute to see the boat swallowed up, that delicate beauty struggling in the midst of the waves, and the roses upon her cheeks chilled by the cold hand of death.

At length, by dint of labour, we reached Mellierie, and after having struggled above an hour, within ten paces of the shore, we at last effected a landing. Which done, all our fatigues were forgotten. Eloisa took upon herself to recompence the trouble which every one had taken; and as in the height of danger her concern was for us, she seemed now on shore to imagine that we had saved nobody but her.

We dined with that appetite which is the gift of hard labour. The trout was served up : Eloisa who was extremely fond of it, eat but little ; and I perceived, that to make the watermen amends for the regret which the late sacrifice cost them, she did not choose that I should eat much myself. My lord, you have observed a thousand times that her amiable disposition is to be seen in trifles as well as in matters of consequence.

After dinner, the water being still rough, and the boat wanting to be refitted, I proposed taking a walk. Eloisa objected to the wind and sun, and took notice of my being fatigued. I had my views, and obviated all her objections. " I have been accustomed (said I) to violent exercises from my infancy : far from hurting my health, they strengthen my constitution ; and my late voyage has still made me more robust. As to the sun and wind, you have your straw hat, and we will get under the wind, and in the woods ; we need only climb among the rocks, and you, who are not fond of a flat, will willingly bear the fatigue." She consented, and we set out while our people were at dinner.

You know, that when I was banished from Valais, I came about ten years ago to Meillerie, to wait for leave to return. It was there I passed those melancholy but pleasing days, solely intent upon her ; and it was from thence I wrote her that letter with which she was so greatly affected.

I always wished to revisit that lovely retreat, which served me as an asylum in the midst of ice, and where my heart loved to converse in idea, with the object of all others most dear to its affections. An opportunity of visiting this beloved spot in a more agreeable season, and in company with her whole image formerly dwelt there with me, was the secret motive of my walk. I took a pleasure in pointing out to her those old memorials of such a constant and unfortunate passion.

We got there after an hour's walk through cool and winding paths, which ascending insensibly between the trees and the rocks, were no otherwise inconvenient than by being tedious. As we drew near, and I recollected former tokens, I found myself a little disordered; but I overcame it; I concealed my uneasiness, and we reached the place. This solitary spot formed a wild and desert nook, but full of those sorts of beauties which are only agreeable to susceptible minds, and appear horrible to others. A torrent, occasioned by the melting of the snow, rolled in a muddy stream within twenty paces of us, and carried dirt, sand, and stones along with it, not without considerable noise. Behind us, a chain of inaccessible rocks divided the place where we stood from that part of the Alps which they call the ice-houses, because from the beginning of the world they have been covered with vast moun-

tains of ice, which are continually increasing*. Forests of gloomy fir-trees afforded us a melancholy shade on the right. On the left was a large wood of oak, beyond which the torrent issued, and beneath that vast body of water which the lake forms in the bay of the Alps, parted us from the rich coast of the *Pays de Vaud*, crowning the whole landscape with the top of the majestic Jura.

In the midst of those noble and superb objects, the little spot where we were displayed all the charms of an agreeable and rural retreat; small floods of water filtered through the rocks, and flowed along the verdure in crystal streams. Some wild fruit-trees leaned their heads over ours; the cool and moist earth was covered with grass and flowers. Comparing this agreeable retreat with the objects which surrounded us, one would have thought that this desert spot was designed as an asylum for two lovers, who alone had escaped the general wreck of nature.

When we had reached this corner, and I had attentively examined it for some time, "Now (said I to Eloisa, looking at her with eyes swimming in tears) is your heart perfectly still in this place, and do you feel no secret emotion at the

* Those mountains are so high, that half an hour after sun-set its rays still gild the tops of them, and the reflection of red on those white summits forms a beautiful roseate colour, which may be perceived at a great distance.

sight of a spot which is full of you?" Immediately, without waiting for her answer, I led her towards the rock, and shewed her where her cypher was engraved in a thousand places, with several verses in Petrarch and Tasso, relative to the state I was in when I engraved them. On seeing them again at such a distance of time, I found how powerfully the review of these objects renewed my former violent sensations. I addressed her with some degree of impetuosity: "O Eloisa, the everlasting delight of my soul! this is the spot, where the most constant lover in the world formerly sighed for thee: This is the retreat, where thy beloved image made all the scene of his felicity, and prepared him for that happiness which you yourself afterwards dispensed. No fruit or shade were then to be found here: these compartments were not then furnished with verdure or flowers; the course of these streams did not then make these separations; these birds did not chirp then, the voracious spar-hawk, the dismal crow, and the dreadful eagle alone made these caverns echo with their cries; huge lumps of ice hung from these rocks; festoons of snow were all the ornaments which bedecked these trees: every thing here bore marks of the rigour of winter and hoary frost; the ardour of my affection alone made this place supportable, and I spent whole days here, wrapt in thought of thee. Here is

the stone where I used to sit, to reflect on your happy abode at a distance ; on this I penned that letter which moved your heart ; these sharp flints served me as graving tools to cut out your name ; here I crossed that frozen torrent to regain one of your letters which the wind had carried off ; there I came to review, and give a thousand kisses to the last you ever wrote to me ; this is the brink, where, with a gloomy and greedy eye, I measured the depth of this abyss : in short, it was here, that, before my sad departure, I came to bewail you as dead, and swore never to survive you.— Oh ! thou lovely fair one, too constantly adored, thou for whom alone I was born ! must I revisit this spot with you by my side, and must I regret the time I spent here in bewailing your absence ?”——I was proceeding farther ; but Eloisa perceiving me draw near the brink was affrighted, and, seizing my hand, pressed it, without speaking a word, looked tenderly upon me, and could scarce suppress a rising sigh ; soon after, turning from me, and taking me by the arm, “ Let us be gone, my friend, (said she, with a tone of emotion) the air of this place is not good for me.” I went with her sighing, but without making her any answer ; and I quitted that melancholy spot for ever, with as much regret as I would have taken leave of Eloisa herself.

We came back gently to the harbour, after some little wandering, and parted. She chose to

be alone, and I continued walking, without knowing whither I went. At my return, the boat not being yet ready, nor the water smooth, we made a melancholy supper, with downcast eyes, and pensive looks, eating little, and talking still less. After supper, we sat on the strand, waiting an opportunity to go off. The moon shone on a sudden, the water became smoother, and Eloisa proposed our departure. I handed her into the boat, and when I sat down by her, I never thought of quitting her hand. We kept a profound silence. The equal and measured sound of the oars threw me into a reverie. The lively chirping of the snipes*, recalling to my mind the pleasures of a past period, made me dull. By degrees I found the melancholy which oppressed me increase. A serene sky, the mild reflection of the moon, the silver froth of the water which sparkled around us, the concurrence of agreeable sensations, even the presence of the beloved object herself, could not banish bitter reflections from my mind.

I began with recollecting a walk of the same kind which we took together, during the rapture

* The snipe on the lake of Geneva is not the bird called by that name in France. The more lively and animating chirping of the former gives an air of life and freshness to the lake at night, which renders its banks still more delightful.

of our early loves. All the pleasing sensations which then affected me were present to my mind, to torment me the more; all the adventures of our youth, our studies, our entertainments, our letters, our assignations, our pleasures,

E tanta fede, e dolci memorie.

E sì lungo costume !

Our constant vows, memorial sweet !

Which love so often prompted to repeat.

A crowd of objects, which recalled the image of my past happiness, all pressed upon me, and rushed into my memory, to increase my present wretchedness. It is past, said I to myself; those times, those happy times, will be no more; they are gone for ever! Alas! they will never return; and yet we live, and we are together, and our hearts are still united! I seemed as if I could have endured her death or her absence with more patience; and thought that I had suffered less all the time I was parted from her. When I bewailed her at a distance, the hope of seeing her again was comfort to my soul; I flattered myself that the sight of her would banish all my sorrows in an instant, at least, I could conceive it possible to be in a more cruel situation than my own.— But to be by her side, to see her, to touch her, to talk to her, to love her, to adore her, and, whilst I almost enjoyed her again, to find her lost to me

for ever ; this was what threw me into such fits of fury and rage, as by degrees agitated me even to despair. My mind soon began to conceive deadly projects, and in a transport, which I yet tremble to think of, I was violently tempted to throw her, with myself, into the waves, and to end my days and tedious torments in her arms.— This horrid temptation grew so strong at last, that I was obliged suddenly to quit her hand, and walk to the other end of the boat.

There my lively emotions began to take another turn ; a more gentle sensation by degrees stole upon my mind, and tenderness overcame despair ; I began to shed floods of tears, and that condition, compared to the state I had just been in, was not unattended with pleasure. I wept heartily for a long time, and found myself easier. When I was tolerably composed, I returned to Eloisa, and took her by the hand again. She had her handkerchief in her hand, which I found wet. “ Ah ! (said I to her softly) I find that our hearts have not ceased to sympathise ! ” — “ True (said she, in a broken accent) but may it be the last time they ever correspond in this manner ! ” We then began to talk about indifferent matters, and, after an hour’s rowing, we arrived without any other accident. When I came in, I perceived that her eyes were red, and much swelled ; and she must have discovered that mine were not in

a better condition. After the fatigue of this day, she stood in great need of rest: she withdrew, and I went to bed.

Such, my friend, is the journal of the day, in which, without exception, I experienced the most lively emotions I ever felt. I hope they will prove a crisis, which will entirely restore me to myself. Moreover, I must tell you that this adventure has convinced me, more than all the power of argument, of the free will of man, and the merit of virtue. How many people yield to weak temptations? As for Eloisa, my eyes beheld, and my heart felt her emotions: she underwent the most violent struggle that day that ever human nature sustained: nevertheless, she conquered. O, my lord, when, seduced by your mistress, you had power at once to triumph over her desires and your own, was you not more than man? But for your example I had perhaps been lost. The recollection of your virtue renewed my own a hundred times in that perilous day.

LETTER CXXXV*.

FROM LORD B——.

AWAKE! my friend, and emerge from childhood. Let not your reason slumber to the end of your

* This letter appears to have been written before the receipt of the preceding.

life. The hours glide imperceptibly away, and it is now high time for you to grow wise. At thirty years of age surely a man should begin to reflect. Reflect, therefore, and be a man at least once before you die.

Your heart, my dear friend, has long imposed on your understanding. You strove to philosophise before you were capable of it, mistaking your feelings for reason, and judging of things by the impressions they made on you, which has always kept you ignorant of their real state. A good heart, I will own, is indispensibly necessary to the knowledge of truth : he who feels nothing can learn nothing ; he may float from error to error in a sea of scepticism, but his discoveries will be vain, and his information fruitless, being ignorant of the relation of things to man, on which all true science depends. It were to stop half way, however, in our pursuits after knowledge, not to inquire also into the relation of things to each other, in order to be better able to judge of their connexion with ourselves. To know the nature and operation of our passions is to know little, if we know not, at the same time, how to judge of and estimate their objects. This latter knowledge is to be acquired only in the tranquillity of studious retirement. The youth of the philosopher is the time for experiment, his passions being the instrument of his inquiries ; but

after having applied himself long enough to the perception of external objects, he retires within himself to consider, to compare, to know them. To this task you ought to apply yourself sooner than any other person in the world. All the pleasures and pains of which a susceptible mind is capable, you have felt; all that a man can see, you have seen. In the space of twelve years you have exhausted all those sensations which might have served you during a long life, and have acquired, even in youth, the extensive experience of age. The first observations you were led to make were on simple, unpolished villagers, on persons almost such as they came out of the hand of nature; just as if they had been presented to you for the ground-work of your piece, or as proper objects by which to compare every other. Banished next to the metropolis of one of the most celebrated people in the universe, you leaped, as one may say, from one extremity to the other, your genius supplying all the intermediate degrees. Then visiting the only nation of men which remains among the various herds that are scattered over the face of the earth, you had an opportunity of seeing a well-governed society, or at least a society under a good government; you had there an opportunity of observing how far the public voice is the foundation of liberty.— You have travelled through all climates, and have visited all countries beneath the sun. Add

to this, a sight still more worthy admiration; that which you enjoy in the presence of the sublime and refined soul, triumphant over its passions, and ruling over itself. The first object of your affections is that which is now daily before you, your admiration of which is but the better founded, for your having seen and contemplated so many others. There is now nothing more worth your attention or concern. The only object of your future contemplation should be yourself, that of your future enjoyment the fruits of your knowledge. You have lived enough for this life; think now of living for that which is to come, and which will last for ever.

Your passions, by which you were so long enslaved, did not deprive you of your virtues. This is all your boast, and doubtless you have reason to glory in it; yet, be not too proud. Your very fortitude is the effect of your weakness. Do you know how it came that you grew enamoured of virtue? It was because virtue always appeared to your imagination in the amiable form of that lovely woman, by whom she is so truly represented, and whose image you will always adore. But will you never love her for her own sake? will you never, like Eloisa, court virtue of your own accord? Vain and indolent enthusiast! will you content yourself with barely admiring her virtues, without attempting to imitate

them? You speak in rapture of the manner, in which she discharges the important duties of wife and mother; but when will you discharge those of a man and a friend, by her example! Shall a woman be able to triumph over herself, and a philosopher find it difficult to conquer his passions? Will you continue to be always a mere prater, like the rest of them, and be content to write good books, instead of doing good actions*? Take care, my friend; I still perceive

* Not that this philosophical age has not produced one true philosopher. I know one, I must confess, and but one; but the happiest circumstance is, that he resides in my native country. Shall I venture publicly to name him, whose honour it is to have remained unknown? Yes, learned and modest Abduzit, let your sublime simplicity forgive my zeal, which, to say truth, hath not your name for its object. No, it is not you I would make known in an age unworthy to admire you; it is Geneva I would honour, by making it known as the place of your residence. It is my fellow-citizens who are honoured by your presence. Happy the country where the merit that conceals itself is by so much the more esteemed. Happy the people among whom presumptuous and forward youth is ashamed of its dogmatic insolence, and blushes at its vain knowledge before the learned ignorance of age. Venerable and virtuous old man! you have never been praised by babbling wits; no noisy academican has written your eulogium. Instead of depositing all your wisdom in books, you have displayed it in your life, as an example to the country you have deigned to make the object of your esteem. You have lived like Socrates; but he died by the hands of his fellow-citizens, while you are cherished by yours.

an air of softness and effeminacy in your writing, which displeases me, as I think it rather the effect of an unextinguished passion than peculiar to your character. I hate imbecility in any one, and cannot bear the thoughts of it in my friend. There is no such thing as virtue without fortitude, for pusillanimity is the certain attendant on vice. How dare you rely on your own strength, who have no courage? Believe me, were Eloisa as weak as you, the very first opportunity would debase you into an infamous adulterer. While you remain alone with her, therefore, learn to know her worth, and blush at your own demerit.

I hope soon to be able to see you at Clarens; you know the motives of my desiring to see Italy again. Twelve years of mistakes and troubles have rendered me suspicious of myself; to resist my inclinations, however, my own abilities might suffice; but to give the preference of one to the other, to know which I should indulge, requires the assistance of a friend: nor shall I take less pleasure in being obliged to him on this occasion, than I have done in obliging him on others. Between friends, their obligations, as well as their affections, should be reciprocal. Do not deceive yourself, however; before I put any confidence in you, I shall enquire whether you are worthy of it, and if you deserve to return

me the services you have formerly received. Your heart I know, and am satisfied with its integrity; but this is not all: it is your judgment I shall have occasion for, to direct me in making a choice which should be governed entirely by reason, and in which mine may be partial. I am not apprehensive of danger from those passions, which, making open war upon us, give us warning to put ourselves upon our defence; and whatever be their effect, leave us still conscious of our errors. We cannot so properly be said to be overcome by these, as to give way to them. I am more fearful of delusion than constraint, and of being involuntarily induced to do what my reason condemns. We have no need of foreign assistance to suppress our inclinations; but the assistance of a friend may be necessary to point out which it is most prudent to indulge: in this case it is that the friendship of a wise man may be useful, by his viewing, in a different light, those objects with which it is our interest to be intimately acquainted. Examine yourself, therefore, and tell me whether, vainly repining at your fate, you will continue for ever useless to yourself and others, or if, resuming the command over yourself, you will at last become capable of advising and assisting your friend.

My affairs will not detain me in London more than a fortnight longer, when I shall set out for our army in Flanders, where I intend to stay

about the same time : so that you must not expect to see me before the end of next month, or the beginning of October. In the mean time, write no more to me at London, but direct your letters to the army, agreeably to the enclosed address. When you write, proceed also in your descriptions ; for, notwithstanding the censure I pass on your letters, they both affect and instruct me, giving me, at the same time, the most flattering ideas of a life of peace and retirement, agreeable to my temper and age. In particular, I charge you to ease my mind of the disquietude you have excited concerning Mrs. Wolmar. If she be dissatisfied, who on earth can hope for happiness ? After the relation you have given me, I cannot conceive what can be wanting to complete her felicity.

L E T T E R CXXXVIII.

TO LORD B——.

YES, my lord, I can with transport assure you the affair of Meillerie was the crisis of my folly and misfortunes. My conversation with M. Wolmar made me perfectly acquainted with the true state of my heart. That heart, too weak I confess, is nevertheless cured of its passion as much as it possibly can be ; and I prefer my present state of silent regret to that of being perpe-

tually fearful of falling into guilt. Since the return of this worthy friend, I no longer hesitate to give him that title which you have rendered so valuable. It is the least I can bestow on every one who assists me in returning to the paths of virtue. My heart is now become as peaceful as the mansion I inhabit. I begin to be at ease in my residence; to live as if I was at home; and, if I do not take upon me altogether the tone and authority of master, I feel yet a greater pleasure in supposing myself a brother of the family. There is something so delightful in the simplicity and equality which reign in this retirement, that I cannot help being affected with tenderness and respect. Thus, I spend my days in tranquillity, amidst practical philosophy and susceptible virtue. In company with this happy couple, their situation insensibly affects me, and raises my heart by degrees into unison with theirs.

What a delightful retreat! What a charming habitation! A continuance in this place renders it even yet more delightful; and though it appears not very striking at first sight, it is impossible not to be pleased with it, when it is once known. The pleasure Mrs. Wolmar takes in discharging the noblest duties, in making all who approach her virtuous and happy, communicates itself to all those who are the objects of her care, to her husband, her children, her guests, her domestics. No tumultuous scenes of noisy mirth, no loud

peals of laughter, are heard in this peaceful mansion; but, in their stead, you always meet with contented hearts and cheerful countenances. If at any time you see a tear, it is the tear of susceptibility and joy. Troubles, cares, and sorrow intrude not here, any more than vice and remorse, of which they are the fruits.

As to Eloisa, it is certain, that, excepting the secret cause of uneasiness with which I acquainted you in my last,* every thing conspires to make her happy. And yet, with so many reasons to be so, a thousand other women would think themselves miserable in the same situation. Her uniform and retired manner of living would be to them insupportable; they would think the noise of children insufferable; they would be fatigued to death with the care of their family; they would not be able to bear the country; the esteem and prudence of a husband, not over tender, would hardly recompense them for his indifference and age; his presence, and even his regard for them, would be burdensome. They would either find means to send him abroad, that they might live more at their liberty; or would leave him to himself; despising the peaceful pleasures of their situation, and seeing more dangerous ones elsewhere, they would never be

* The letter here alluded to is not inserted in this collection. The reason of it will be seen hereafter.

at ease in their own house, unless when they came as visitors. It requires a sound mind, to be able to enjoy the pleasures of retirement ; the virtuous only being capable of amusing themselves with their family concerns, and of voluntarily secluding themselves from the world ; if there be on earth any such thing as happiness, they undoubtedly enjoy it in such a state. But the means of happiness are nothing to those who know not how to make use of them ; and we never know in what true happiness consists, till we have acquired a taste for its enjoyment.

If I were desired to speak with precision, as to the reason why the inhabitants of this place are happy, I should think I could not answer with greater propriety than to say, it is because *they here know how to live* ; not in the sense in which these words would be taken in France, where it would be understood that they had adopted certain customs and manners in vogue : No, but they have adopted such manners as are most agreeable to human life, and the purposes for which man came into the world ; to that life you mention, of which you have set me an example, which extends beyond itself, and is not given up for lost even in the hour of death.

Eloisa has a father who is anxious for the honour and interests of his family : she has children for whose subsistence it is necessary to provide. This ought to be the chief care of man in a

state of society ; and was, therefore, the first in which Eloisa and her husband united. When they began house-keeping, they examined into the state of their fortunes ; not considering so much whether they were proportioned to their rank, as to their wants ; and seeing they were sufficient for the provision of an honourable family, they had not so bad an opinion of their children, as to be fearful lest the patrimony they had to leave, would not content them. They applied themselves, therefore, rather to improve their present, than acquire a larger fortune ; they placed their money rather safely than profitably ; and, instead of purchasing new estates, set about increasing the value of that which they already had ; leaving their own example in this point, as the only treasure by which they would desire to see the inheritance of their offspring increased.

It is true, that an estate which is not augmented, is liable to many accidents, by which it will naturally diminish : but if this were a sufficient motive to begin increasing, when could it cease to be a pretext for a constant augmentation ? Must it be divided among several children ? Be it so. Must they be all idle ? Will not the industry of each be a supplement to his share ? and ought it not to be considered in the partition ? It is thus that insatiable avarice makes its way under the mask of prudence, and

leads to vice under the cloak of its own security. "It is in vain (says M. Wolmar) to attempt to give to human affairs that stability which is not in their nature. Prudence itself requires that we should leave many things to chance; and if our lives and fortunes depend so much on accident, what a folly is it to make ourselves really unhappy, in order to prevent doubtful evils, or avoid inevitable dangers?"—The only precaution he took was, to live one whole year on his principal, in order to have so much before-hand to receive of the interest, so that he had always the yearly product of his estate at command. He chose rather to diminish his capital, than to be perpetually under the necessity of dunning for his rents; the consequence of which has been in the end advantageous to him, as it prevented him from borrowing, and other ruinous expedients, to which many people are obliged to have recourse on every unforeseen accident. Thus good management supplies the place of parsimony, and he is in fact a gainer by what he has spent.

The master of this house possesses but a moderate fortune, according to the estimation of the world; but in reality I hardly know any body more opulent. There is, indeed, no such thing as absolute wealth: that term signifying only the relation between the wants and possessions of those who are rich. One man is rich, though possessing only an acre of land; another is a beggar in the

midst of heaps of gold. Luxury and caprice have no bounds, and make more persons poor than their real wants. But the proportion between their wants, and their ability of supplying them, is here established on a sure foundation, namely, the perfect harmony subsisting between husband and wife: the former taking upon him the charge of collecting the rents and profits of his estate, and the latter, that of regulating their expences; and on this harmony depends their wealth.

I was at first struck with a peculiarity in the economy of this house, where there appeared so much ease, freedom, and gaiety, in the midst of order and diligence; the great fault of well-regulated houses being, that they always wear an air of gloominess and restraint. The extreme solicitude also of the heads of the family, looks too much like avarice. Every thing about them seems constrained, and there appears something servile in their punctuality, which renders it intolerable. The domestics do their duty indeed, but then they do it with an air of discontent and mistrust. The guests, it is true, are well received; but they dare not make use of a freedom cautiously bestowed, and are always afraid of doing something that will be reckoned a breach of regularity. Such slavish fathers of families cannot be said to live for themselves, but for their children; without considering that they are not only fathers but men, and that they ought to set

their children an example how to live prudent and happy. More judicious maxims are adopted here. M. Wolmar thinks one of the principal duties of a father of a family, is to make his house, in the first place, agreeable, that his children may delight in their home, and that, seeing their father happy, they may be tempted to tread in his footsteps. Another of his maxims, and which he often repeats, is, that the gloomy and sordid lives of fathers and mothers are almost always the first cause of the ill-conduct of children.

As to Eloisa, who never had any other guide, and who needed no better, than her own heart, she obeys, without scruple, its dictates; being then certain of doing right. Can a mind so susceptible as her's be insensible to pleasure? On the contrary, she delights in every amusement, nor refuses to join in any diversion that promises to be agreeable; but her pleasures are the pleasures of Eloisa. She neglects neither her own convenience, nor the satisfaction of those who are dear to her. She esteems nothing superfluous that may contribute to the happiness of a sensible mind; but censures every thing as such that serves only to make a figure in the eyes of others; so that you will find in this house all the gratifications which luxury and pleasure can bestow, without refinement or effeminacy. With respect to magnificence and pomp, you will see no more of it than she was obliged to submit to, in order to please

her father ; her own taste, however, prevails even here, which consists in giving to every thing less brilliancy and show, than grace and elegance. When I talk to her of the methods which are daily invented at Paris and London, to hang the coaches easier, she does not disapprove of that ; but when I tell her of the great expence they are at in the varnishing of them, she can hardly believe or comprehend me : she asks me, if such fine varnish makes the coaches more commodious. Indeed, she scruples not to say that I exaggerate a good deal on the scandalous paintings with which they now adorn their equipages, instead of the coats of arms formerly used ; as if it were more eligible to be known to the world for a man of licentious manners, than as a man of good family. But she was particularly shocked when I told her that the ladies had introduced, and kept up this custom, and that their chariots were distinguishable from those of the gentlemen only by paintings more lascivious and immodest. I was obliged to recount to her an expression of your noble friend's on this subject, which she could hardly digest. I was with him one day to look at a vis-a-vis which happened to be in this taste. But he no sooner cast his eyes on the pannels, than he turned away from it, telling the owner, that he should offer carriages of that kind to wanton women of quality, for that no modest man could make use of them.

As the first step to virtue is to forbear doing ill, so the first step to happiness is to be free from pain. These two maxims, which, well understood, would render precepts of morality in a great degree useless, are favourite ones with Mrs. Wolmar. She is extremely affected by the misfortunes of others; and it would be as difficult for her to be happy with wretched objects about her, as it would be for an innocent man to preserve his virtue, and live in the midst of vice. She has none of that barbarous pity, which is satisfied with turning away its eye from the miserable objects it might relieve. On the contrary, she makes it her business to seek out such objects: it is the existence, and not the presence of the unhappy, which gives her affliction. It is not sufficient for her to be ignorant that there are any such; it is necessary to her quiet that she should be assured there are none miserable; at least within her sphere of charity: for it would be unreasonable to extend her concern beyond her own neighbourhood, and to make her happiness depend upon the welfare of all mankind. She takes care to inform herself of the necessities of all that live near her, and interests herself in their relief, as if their wants were her own. She knows every one personally, includes them all, as it were, in her family, and spares no pains to banish or alleviate those misfortunes and afflictions to which human life is subject.

I am desirous, my lord, of profiting by your instructions ; but you must forgive me a piece of enthusiasm, of which I am no longer ashamed, and with which you yourself are affected. There will never be another Eloisa in the world. Providence takes a particular interest in every thing that regards her, nor leaves any thing to the consequence of accident. Heaven seems to have sent her upon earth, to serve at once as an example of that excellence of which human nature is capable, and of that happiness it may enjoy in the obscurity of private life, without having recourse either to those public virtues which sometimes raise humanity above itself, or to those honours with which the breath of popular applause rewards them. Her fault, if love be a fault, has served only to display her fortitude and virtue. Her relations, her friends, her servants, all happily situated, were formed to respect her, and be respected by her. Her country is the only one upon earth where she ought to have been born ; to be happy herself, it was necessary for her to live among a happy people. If, to her misfortune, she had been born among those unhappy wretches, who groan beneath a load of oppression, and struggle in vain against the iron hand of cruelty, every complaint of the oppressed had poisoned the sweets of her life ; the common ruin had been her's, and her benevolent heart had

made her feel incessantly those evils she could not have redressed.

Instead of that, every thing here animates and supports the native goodness of her disposition. She has no public calamities to afflict her. She sees not around her the frightful pictures of indigence and despair. The villages, in easy circumstances, have more need of her advice than her bounty.* But, if there be found among them an orphan, too young to earn his subsistence; an obscure widow, who pines in secret indigence; a childless father, whose hands, enfeebled by age, cannot supply him with the means of life; she is not afraid that her bounty will increase the public charge, by encouraging idleness or knavery. The happiness she herself feels multiplies and extends itself to all around her. Every house she enters soon becomes a copy of her own: nor are convenience and order only pursued from her example, but harmony and goodness become equally the objects of domestic management. When she goes abroad, she sees

* There is, near Clarens, a village called Moutré, the right of common to which is sufficient to maintain the inhabitants, though they had not a foot of land of their own. For which reason, the freedom of that village is almost as difficult to be obtained as that of Berne. It is a great pity that some honest magistrate is not appointed to make these burghers a little more sociable, or their burghership less dear.

none but agreeable objects about her ; and when she returns home, she is saluted by others still more engaging. Her heart is delighted by every prospect that meets her eyes ; and, little susceptible as it is of self-love, it is led to love itself in the effects of its own benevolence. No, my lord, I repeat in again ; nothing that regards Eloisa can be indifferent to the cause of virtue. Her charms, her talents, her taste, her errors, her afflictions, her abode, her friends, her family, her pains, her pleasures, every thing in short that completes her destiny, compose a life without example ; such as few women would choose to imitate, and yet such as all, in spite of themselves, must admire.

What pleases me most, in the solicitude which prevails here regarding the happiness of others, is, that their benevolence is always exerted with prudence, and is never abused. We do not always succeed in our benevolent intentions ; but, on the contrary, some people imagine they are doing great services, who are, in reality, doing great injuries ; and, with a view to a little manifest good, are guilty of much unforeseen evil. Mrs. Wolmar, indeed, possesses, in an eminent degree, a qualification very rare, even among women of the best character ; I mean, an exquisite discernment in the distribution of her favours, and that as well in the choice of means to render them really useful, as of the persons on whom they

are bestowed. For her conduct in this point, she has laid down certain rules, to which she invariably adheres. She knows how to grant or refuse every thing that is asked of her, without betraying the least weakness in her compliance, or caprice in her denial. Whoever hath committed one infamous or wicked action, hath nothing to hope for from her but justice, and her pardon, if he has offended her; but never that favour and protection which she can bestow on a worthier object. I heard her once refuse a favour, which depended on herself only, to a man of this stamp. "I wish you happy (said she to him coldly) but "I shall not contribute any thing to make you "so, lest I should put it in your power to injure "others. There are too many honest people in "the world who require relief, for me to think of "assisting you." It is true, this piece of just severity cost her dear, and it is but seldom she has occasion to exercise it. Her maxim is, to look upon all those as deserving people, of whose demerits she is not fully convinced; and there are few persons weak and wicked enough not to evade the full proofs of their guilt. She has none of that indolent charity of the wealthy, who give money to the miserable, to be excused from attending to their distress; and know how to answer their petitions only by giving alms. Her purse is not inexhaustible, and since she is become the mother of a family, she regulates it with more

economy. Of all the kinds of relief we may afford to the unhappy, the giving alms is certainly that which costs us least trouble ; but it is also the most transitory and least serviceable to the object relieved : Eloisa does not seek to get rid of such objects, but to be useful to them.

Neither does she grant her recommendation, or exert her good offices, without first knowing whether the use intended to be made of her interest be just and reasonable. Her protection is never refused to any one who really stands in need of, and deserves to obtain it : but for those who desire to raise themselves through fickleness or ambition only, she can very seldom be prevailed upon to give herself any trouble. The natural business of man is to cultivate the earth, and subsist on its produce. The peaceful inhabitant of the country needs only to know in what happiness consists ; to be happy. All the real pleasures of humanity are within his reach ; he feels only those pains which are inseparable from it, those pains which, whoever seeks to remove, will only change for others more severe.* His situation is the only necessary, the only useful one, in life. He is never unhappy, but when others tyrannize

* Man, perverted from his first state of simplicity, becomes so stupid, that he even knows not what to desire. His wishes always tend to wealth, and never to happiness.

over him, or seduce him by their vices. In agriculture and husbandry consist the real prosperity of a country, the greatness and strength which a people derive from themselves, that which depends not on other nations, which is not obliged to attack others for its own preservation, but is productive of the surest means of its own defence. In making an estimate of the strength of a nation, a superficial observer would visit the court, the prince, his posts, his troops, his magazines, and his fortified towns; but the true politician would take a survey of the country, and visit the cottages of the husbandmen. The former would only see what is already executed; but the latter what was capable of being put into execution.

On this principle they proceed here, and yet more so at Etange; they contribute as much as possible to make the peasants happy in their condition, without ever assisting them to change it. The better, as well as the poorer sort of people, are equally desirous of sending their children to the cities; the one that they may study and become gentlemen, the others, that they may find employment, and so ease their parents of the charge of maintaining them. The young people, on their part, have curiosity, and are generally fond of roving: the girls aspire to the dress and finery of the citizens; and the boys, most of them, go into foreign service, thinking it better to return with the haughty and mean air of mercena-

ries, and a ridiculous contempt of their former condition, than with that love for their country and liberty which honourably distinguished their progenitors. It is the care of this benevolent family to remonstrate against these mistaken prejudices; to represent to the peasants the danger of their children's principles; the ill consequences of sending them from home, and the continual risks they run of losing their life, fortune, and morals, where a thousand are ruined for one who does well. If, after all, they continue obstinate, they are left at their own indiscretion, to run into vice and misery, and the care which was thrown away on them, is turned upon those who have listened to reason. This is exerted in teaching them to honour their native condition, by seeming to honour it ourselves: we do not converse with peasants, indeed, in the style of courts; but we treat them with a grave and distant familiarity, which, without raising any one out of his station, teaches them to respect ours. There is not one honest labourer in the village, who does not rise greatly in his own estimation, when an opportunity offers of our showing the difference of our behaviour to him, and to such petty visitants, who come home to make a figure for a day or two, and to eclipse their relations. M. Wolmar and the Baron, when he is here, seldom fail of being present at the exercises and

reviews of the militia of the village, and parts adjacent : their presence has a great effect on the youth of the country, who are naturally of a martial and spirited temper, and are extremely delighted to see themselves honoured with the presence of veteran officers. They are still prouder of their own merit, when they see soldiers retired from foreign service, less expert than themselves : yet this they often do ; for, do what you will, five-pence a-day, and the fear of being caned, will never produce that emulation which may be excited in a free man under arms, by the presence of his relations, his neighbours, his friends, his mistress, and the honour of his country.

Mrs. Wolmar's great maxim is, therefore, never to encourage any one to change his condition, but to contribute all in her power to make every one happy in his present station ; being particularly solicitous to prevent the happiest of all situations, that of a peasant in a free state, from being despised, in favour of other employments.

I remember, that I one day made an objection on this subject, founded on the different talents which nature seems to have bestowed on mankind, in order to fit them for different occupations, without any regard to their birth. This she obviated, however, by observing that there were two more material things to be consulted, before talents, these were, virtue and happiness. " Man

(said she) is too noble a being to be made a mere tool of for the use of others: he ought not to be employed in what he is fit for, without consulting how far such employment is fit for him; for we are not made for our stations, but our stations for us. In the right distribution of things, therefore, we should not adapt men to circumstances, but circumstances to men; we should not seek that employment for which a man is best adapted, but that which is best adapted to make him virtuous and happy. For it can never be right to destroy one human soul for the temporal advantage of others, nor to make any man a villain for the use of honest people. Now, out of a thousand persons who leave their native villages, there are not ten of them but what are spoiled by going to town, and become even more profligate than those who initiate them into vice. Those who succeed, and make their fortunes, frequently compass it by base and dishonest means; while the unsuccessful, instead of returning to their former occupation, rather choose to turn beggars and thieves. But, supposing that one out of the thousand resists the contagion of example, and perseveres in the sentiments of honesty, do you think that, upon the whole, his life is as happy as it might have been in the tranquil-obscurity of his first condition?

“It is no easy matter to discover the talents with which nature hath severally endowed us.

On the contrary, it is very difficult to distinguish those of young persons the best educated and most attentively observed: how then shall a peasant, meanly bred, presume to judge of his own? There is nothing so equivocal as the genius frequently attributed to youth; the spirit of imitation has often a greater share in it than natural ability, and very often it depends more on accident than a determined inclination; nor does even inclination itself always determine the capacity. Real talents, or true genius, are attended with a certain simplicity of disposition, which makes it less restless and enterprising, less ready to thrust itself forward than a superficial and false one; which is nevertheless generally mistaken for the true, and consists only in a vain desire of making a figure without talents to support it. One of these geniuses hears the drum beat, and is immediately in idea a general; another sees a palace building, and directly commences architect. Thus Gustin, my gardener, from seeing some of my works, must needs learn to draw. I sent him to Lausanne, to a master, and he imagines himself already a fine painter. The opportunity, and the desire of preferment, generally determine men's professions. But it is not enough to be sensible of the bent of our genius, unless we are willing to pursue it. Will a prince turn coachman, because he is expert at driving a set of horses? Will a duke turn cook, because he is ingenious at inventing ra-

gouts? Our talents all tend to preferment; no one pretends to those which would fit him for an inferior station; do you think this is agreeable to the order of nature? Suppose every one sensible of his own talents, and as willing to employ them, how is it possible? How could they surmount so many obstacles? How could they overcome so many unworthy competitors? He who finds in himself the want of abilities, would call in subtlety and intrigue to his aid; and thereby frequently becomes an over-match for others of greater capacity and sincerity. Have you not told me yourself a hundred times that the many establishments in favour of the arts, have only been of prejudice to them? In multiplying indiscreetly the number of professors and academicians, true merit is lost in the crowd; and the honours due to the most ingenious, are always bestowed on the most intriguing. Did there exist, indeed, a society, wherein the rank and employment of its respective members, were exactly calculated to their talents and personal merit, every one might there aspire to the place he should be most fit for; but it is necessary to conduct ourselves by other rules, and give up that of abilities, in societies where the vilest of all talents is the only one that leads to fortune.

* I will add further (continued she) that I cannot be persuaded of the utility of having so many

different talents displayed. It seems necessary the number of persons so qualified should be exactly proportioned to the wants of society; now, if those only were appointed to cultivate the earth who should have eminent talents for agriculture; or if all those were taken from that employment who might be found more proper for some other; there would not remain a sufficient number of labourers to furnish the common necessities of life. I am apt to think, therefore, that great talents in men are like great virtues in drugs, which nature has provided to cure our maladies, though its intention certainly was, that we should never stand in need of them. In the vegetable creation there are plants which are poisonous, in the brutal, animals that would tear us to pieces; and among mankind there are those who possess talents no less destructive to their species. Besides, if every thing were to be put to that use for which its qualities seem best adapted, it might be productive of more harm than good in the world. There are thousands of simple honest people, who have no occasion for a diversity of great talents; supporting themselves better by their simplicity than others with all their ingenuity. But, in proportion as their morals are corrupted, their talents are displayed, as if to serve as a supplement to the virtues they have lost, and to oblige the vicious to be useful, in spite of themselves."

Another subject on which we differed was the

relieving of beggars. As we live near a public road, great numbers are constantly passing by: and it is the custom of the house to give to every one that asks. I represented to her, that this practice was not only throwing that money away, which might be charitably bestowed on persons in real want, but that it tended to multiply beggars and vagabonds, who take pleasure in that idle life, and by rendering themselves a burden to society, deprive it of their labour.

“ I see very well (says she) you have imbibed prejudices, by living in great cities, and some of those maxims, by which your complaisant reasoners love to flatter the hard-heartedness of the wealthy: you make use of their very expressions. Do you think to degrade a poor wretch below a human being, by giving him the contemptuous name of beggar. Compassionate as you really are, how could you prevail on yourself to make use of it? Repeat it no more, my friend; it does not come well from your lips: believe me, it is more dishonourable for the cruel man by whom it is used, than for the unhappy wretch who bears it. I will not pretend to decide whether those who thus inveigh against the giving alms are right or wrong; but this I know, that M. Wolmar, whose good sense is not inferior to that of your philosophers, and who has frequently told me of the arguments they use to suppress their natural com-

passion and sensibility, has always appeared to despise them, and has never disapproved of my conduct. His own argument is simple. We permit, says he, and even support, at a great expence, a multitude of useless professions; many of which serve only to spoil and corrupt our manners. Now, to look upon the profession of a beggar as a trade, so far are we from having any reason to fear the like corruption of manners from the exercise of it, that, on the contrary, it serves to excite in us those sentiments of humanity which ought to unite all mankind. Again, if we look upon begging as a talent, why should I not reward the eloquence of a beggar, who has art enough to excite my compassion, and induce me to relieve him, as well as I do a comedian, who, on the stage, makes me shed a few fruitless tears? If the one makes me admire the good actions of others, the other induces me to do a good action myself; all that we feel at the representation of a tragedy goes off as soon as we come out of the play house; but the remembrance of the unhappy object we have relieved gives continual pleasure. A great number of beggars may be burdensome to a state: but of how many professions, which are tolerated and encouraged, may we not say the same? It belongs to the legislature and administration to take care there should be no beggars; but, in order to make

them lay down their trade,* is it necessary to make all other ranks of people inhuman and unnatural? For my part, continuèd Eloisa, without knowing what the poor may be to the state, I know they are all my brethren, and that I cannot, without thinking myself inexcusable, refuse them the small relief they ask of me. The greater part of them, I own, are vagabonds; but I know too much of life to be ignorant how many misfortunes may reduce an honest man to such a situa-

* To give to beggars, say some people, is to raise a nursery of thieves; though it is, on the contrary, to prevent their becoming such. I allow that the poor ought not to be encouraged to turn beggars; but, when they once are so, they ought to be supported, lest they should turn robbers. Nothing induces people to change their profession so much as their not being able to live by it: now, those who have once experienced the lazy life of a beggar, get such an aversion to work, that they had rather go upon the highway, at the hazard of their necks, than betake themselves again to labour. A farthing is soon asked for, and soon refused; but twenty farthings might provide a supper for a poor man, whom twenty refusals might exasperate to despair: and who is there who would ever refuse so slight a gift, if he reflected that he might thereby be the means of saving two men, the one from theft, and perhaps the other from being murdered? I have somewhere read, that beggars are a kind of vermin that hang about the wealthy. It is natural for children to cling about their parents; but the rich, like cruel parents, disown theirs, and leave them to be maintained by each other.

tion ; and how can I be sure, that an unhappy stranger, who comes in the name of God to implore my assistance, and to beg a morsel of bread, is not such an honest man, ready to perish for want, and whom my refusal may drive to despair ? The alms I distribute at the door are of no great value. A halfpenny and a piece of bread are refused to nobody ; and twice the proportion is always given to such as are maimed, or otherwise evidently incapable of labour. Should they meet with the same relief at every house which can afford it, it would be sufficient to support them on their journey ; and that is all a needy traveller has a right to expect. But supposing this was not enough to yield them any real help, it is at least a proof that we take some part in their distress ; a sort of salutation that softens the rigour of refusing them more. A halfpenny and a morsel of bread costs little more, and are a more civil answer than a mere *God help you* ; which is too often the only thing bestowed, as if the gifts of Providence were not placed in the hands of men, or that Heaven had any other store on earth than what is laid up in the coffers of the rich. In short, whatever we ought to think of such unfortunate wretches, and though nothing should in justice be given to common beggars, we ought at least, out of respect to ourselves, to take some notice of suffering humanity, and not harden our hearts at the sight of the miserable.

"This is my behaviour to those, who, without any other subterfuge or pretext, come openly a begging. With respect to such as pretend to be workmen, and complain for want of employment, we have here tools of almost every kind for them, and we set them to work. By this means we assist them, and put their industry to the proof; a circumstance which is now so well known, that the lazy cheat never comes again to the gate."

It is thus, my lord, this angelic creature always deduces something from her own virtues, to combat those vain subtleties, by which people of cruel dispositions palliate their vices. The sollicitude and pains she takes to relieve the poor are also ranked among her amusements, and take up great part of the time she can spare from her most important duties. After having performed her duty to others, she then thinks of herself; and the means she takes to render life agreeable, may be reckoned among their virtues: so commendable are her constant motives of action, that moderation and good sense are always mixed with her pleasures! She is ambitious to please her husband, who always delights to see her cheerful and gay: she is desirous of instilling into her children a taste for innocent pleasures, wherein moderation, order, and simplicity, prevail, and secure the heart from the violence of impetuous passions. She amuses herself, therefore, to divert them, as

the dove softens the grain to nourish the young ones.

Eloisa's mind and body are equally sensible. The same delicacy prevails as well in her senses as her sentiments. She was formed to know and taste every pleasure. Virtue having been long esteemed by her as the most refined of all delights, in the peaceful enjoyment of that supreme pleasure she debars herself of none that are consistent with it; but then her method of enjoyment resembles the austerity of self-denial: not indeed of that afflicting and painful self-denial which is hurtful to nature, and which its author rejects as ridiculous homage; but of that slight and moderate restraint by which the empire of reason is preserved; and which serves as a whet to pleasure, by preventing disgust. She will have it, that every thing which pleases the sense, and is not necessary to life, changes its nature, whenever it becomes habitual; that it ceases to be pleasant in becoming needful; that we thus by habit lay ourselves at once under a needless restraint, and deprive ourselves of a real pleasure; and that the art of satisfying our desires lies not in indulging, but in suppressing them. The method she takes to enhance the pleasures of the least amusement, is to deny herself the use of it twenty times for once that she enjoys it. Thus her mind preserves its first vigour; her taste is not spoiled by use; she has no need to excite it by excess;

and I have often seen her take exquisite delight in a child's diversion, which would have been insipid to any other person on earth.

A still nobler object, which she proposes to herself from the exercise of this virtue, is that of remaining always mistress of herself, and thereby to accustom her passions to obedience, and to subject her inclinations to rule. This is a new way to be happy; for it is certain that we enjoy nothing with so little disquietude as what we can part from without pain; and if the philosopher be happy, it is because he is the man from whom fortune can take the least.

But what appears to me the most singular in her moderation is, that she pursues it for the very same reasons which hurry the voluptuous into excess. Life is indeed short, says she, which is a reason for enjoying it to the end, and managing its duration in such a manner as to make the most of it. If one day's indulgence and satiety deprives us of a whole year's taste for enjoyment, it is bad philosophy to pursue our desires so far as they may be ready to lead us, without considering whether we may not outlive our faculties, and our hearts be exhausted before our time. I see that our common epicures, in order to let slip no opportunity of enjoyment, lose all: and, perpetually anxious in the midst of pleasures, can find no enjoyment in any. They lavish away the time of which they think they are economists, and ruin themselves,

like misers, by not knowing how to give any thing away. For my part, I hold the opposite maxim; and should prefer, in this case, rather too much severity than relaxation. It sometimes happens that I break up a party of pleasure, for no other reason than that it is too agreeable; and, by repeating it another time, have the satisfaction of enjoying it twice.

Upon such principles are the sweets of life, and the pleasures of mere amusement regulated here. Amidst her various application to the several branches of her domestic employment, Eloisa takes particular care that the kitchen is not neglected. Her table is spread with abundance; but it is not the destructive abundance of fantastic luxury: all the viands are common, but excellent in their kind; the cookery is simple but exquisite. All that consists in appearance only, whose nicety depends on the fashion, all your delicate and far-fetched dishes, whose scarcity is their only value, are banished from the table of Eloisa. Among the most delicious also of those which are admitted, they daily abstain from some; which they reserve, in order to give an air of festivity to those meals for which they were intended, and which are thereby rendered more agreeable, without being more costly. But of what kind, think you, are these dishes, which are so carefully husbanded? Choice game? Sea-fish? Foreign produce? No. Something better than all that. They are, per-

haps a particular choice salad of the country ; fine greens of our own gardens ; fish of the lake, dressed in a peculiar manner ; cheese from the mountains ; a German patty, or game caught by some of the domestics. The table is served in a modest and rural, but agreeable manner, cheerfulness and gratitude crowning the whole. Your gilt covers, round which the guests sit starving with hunger ; your pompous glasses, stuck out with flowers for the desert, are never introduced here, to take up the place intended for victuals ; we are entirely ignorant of the art of satisfying hunger by the eye. But then, no where do they so well know how to add welcome to good cheer, to eat a good deal without eating too much, to drink cheerfully without intoxication, to sit so long at table without being tired, and to rise from it without disgust. On the first floor there is a little dining-room, different from that in which we usually dine, which is on the ground floor. This room is built in the corner of the house, and has windows in two aspects : those on one side overlook the garden, beyond which we have a prospect of the lake between the trees : on the other side we have a fine view of a spacious vineyard, that begins to display the golden harvest which we shall reap in about two months. The room is small, but ornamented with every thing that can render it pleasant and agreeable. It is here Eloisa gives her little entertainments to

her father, to her husband, to her cousin, to me, to herself, and sometimes to her children. When she orders the table to be spread there, we know immediately the design; and M. Wolmar has given it the name of the Saloon of Apollo: but this saloon differs no less from that of Læcilius, in the choice of the persons entertained, than in that of the entertainment. Common guests are not admitted into it: we never dine there when there are any strangers: it is the inviolable asylum of mutual confidence, friendship, and liberty. The society of hearts is there joined to the social bond of the table; the entrance into it is a kind of initiation into the mysteries of a cordial intimacy; nor do any persons ever meet there, but such as wish never to be separated. We wait impatiently for you, my lord, who are to dine the very first day in the Apollo.

For my part, I was not at first admitted to that honour, which was reserved for me till after my return from Mrs. Orbe's. Not that I imagined they could add any thing to the obliging reception I met with on my arrival; but the supper made for me there gave me other ideas. It is impossible to describe the delightful mixture of familiarity, cheerfulness and social ease, which I then experienced, and had never before tasted in my whole life. I found myself more at liberty, without being told to assume it, and we seemed even to understand one another much better than

before. The absence of the domestics, who were dismissed from their attendance, removed that reserve which I still felt at heart ; and it was then that I first, at the instance of Eloisa, resumed the custom I had laid aside for many years, of drinking wine after meals.

I was enraptured at this repast, and wished that all our meals might have been made in the same manner. "I knew nothing of this delightful room (said I to Mrs. Wolmar) ; why do not you always eat here ?"—"See (replied she) how pretty it is ! Would it not be a pity to spoil it ?" This answer seemed too much out of character for me not to suspect she had some further meaning. "But why (added I) have you not the same conveniences below, that the servants might be sent away, and leave us to talk more at liberty ?" "That (replied she) would be too agreeable, and the trouble of being always at ease is the greatest in the world." I immediately comprehended her system by this, and concluded that her art of managing her pleasures consisted in being sparing of them.

I think she dresses herself with more care than formerly ; the only piece of vanity I ever reproached her for being that of neglecting her dress. The haughty fair one had her reasons, and left me no pretext to disown her power. But, do all she could, my enchantment was too strong for me to think it natural ; I was too obstinate in

attributing her negligence to art. Not that the power of her charms is diminished ; but she now disdains to exert it ; and I should be apt to say, she affected a greater neatness in her dress, that she might appear only a pretty woman, had I not discovered the reason for her present solicitude in this point. During the first two or three days I was mistaken ; for, not reflecting that she was dressed in the same manner at my arrival, which was unexpected, I thought she had done it out of respect to me. I was undeceived, however, in the absence of M. Wolmar. For the next day she was not attired with that elegance which so eminently distinguished her the preceding evening, nor with that affecting and voluptuous simplicity which formerly enchanted me ; but with a certain modesty that speaks through the eyes to the heart, that inspires respect only, and to which beauty itself but gives additional authority. The dignity of wife and mother appeared in all her charms ; the timid and affectionate looks she cast on me, were now mixed with an air of gravity and grandeur, which seemed to cast a veil over her features. In the mean time, she betrayed not the least alteration in her behaviour ; her equality of temper, her candour knew nothing of affectation. She practised only a talent natural to her sex, to change sometimes her sentiments and ideas of them, by a different dress, by a cap of this form, or a gown of that colour. The day on

which she expected her husband's return, she again found the art of adorning her natural charms without hiding them ; she came from her toilet, indeed, a dazzling beauty, and I saw she was not less capable to outshine the most splendid dress, than to adorn the most simple. I could not help being vexed, when I reflected on the cause of her preparation.

This taste for ornament extends itself, from the mistress of the house, through all the family. The master, the children, the servants, the equipage, the building, the garden, the furniture, are all set off and kept in such order as shews what they are capable of, though magnificence is despised. I do not mean true magnificence, and which consists less in the expence, than in the good order and noble disposition of things.*

For my own part, I must confess it appears to

* And that it does so appear to me is indisputable. There is true magnificence in the proportion and symmetry of the parts of a great palace ; but there is none in a confused heap of irregular buildings. There is a magnificence in the uniformity of a regiment in battalia ; but none in the crowd of people that stand gazing on them, although perhaps there is not a man among them whose apparel is not of more value than those of any individual soldier. In a word, magnificence is nothing more than a grand scene of regularity, whence it comes to pass, that, of all sights imaginable, the most magnificent are those of nature.

me a more grand and noble sight, to see a small number of people happy in themselves, and in each other, in a plain modest family, than to see the most splendid palace filled with tumult and discord, and every one of its inhabitants taking advantage of the general disorder, and building up their own fortunes and happiness on the ruin of another. A well governed private family forms a single object, agreeable and delightful to contemplate; whereas, in a riotous palace, we see only a confused assemblage of various objects, whose connexion and dependence are merely apparent. At first sight, indeed, they seem operating to one end; but, on examining them nearer, we are soon undeceived.

To consult only our most natural impressions, it seems that, to despise luxury and parade, we need less of moderation than of taste. Symmetry and regularity are pleasing to every one. The picture of ease and happiness must affect every heart; but a vain pomp, which relates neither to regularity nor happiness, and has only the desire of making a figure in the eyes of others for its object, however favourable an idea it may excite in us of the person who displays it, can give little pleasure to the spectator. But what is taste? Does not a hundred times more taste appear in the order and construction of plain and simple things, than in those which are overloaded with finery? What is convenience? Is any thing in the world

more inconvenient than pomp and pageantry ? What is grandour ? - It is precisely the contrary. When I see the intention of an architect to build a large palace, I immediately ask myself, why is it not larger ? Why does not the man who keeps fifty servants, if he aims at grandeur, keep an hundred ? That fine silver plate, why is it not gold ? The man who gilds his chariot, why does he not also gild the cieling of his apartment ? If his cielings are gilt, why does he not gild the roof too ? He who was desirous of building an high tower, was right in his intention to raise it

* The noise of people in a house of distinction continually disturbs the quiet of the master of it. It is impossible for him to conceal any thing from so many Arguses. A crowd of creditors make him pay dear for that of his admirers. His apartments are generally so large and splendid, that he is obliged to betake himself to a closet, that he may sleep at ease, and his monkey is often better lodged than himself. If he would dine, it depends on his cook, and not on his appetite ; if he would go abroad, he lies at the mercy of his horses. A thousand embarrassments stop him in the streets ; he is impatient to be where he is going, but knows not the use of his legs. His mistress expects him, but the dirty pavement frightens him, and the weight of his laced coat oppresses him, so that he cannot walk twenty paces. Hence he loses, indeed, the opportunity of seeing his mistress : but he is well repaid by the by-standers for the disappointment, every one remarking his equipage, admiring it, and saying aloud to the next person, there goes Mr. Such-a-one !

up to Heaven ; otherwise it was to no purpose to build, as the point where he might at last stop would only serve to shew, at the greater distance, his want of ability. O man ! vain and feeble creature ! Shew me thy power, and I will shew thee thy misery.

A regularity in the disposal of things, every one of which is of real use, and all confined to the necessities of life, not only presents an agreeable prospect, but, as it pleases the eye, at the same time gives content to the heart. For a man views them always in a pleasing light, as relating to, and sufficient for, himself. The picture of his own wants or weakness does not appear, nor does the cheerful prospect affect him with sorrowful reflections. I defy any sensible man to contemplate, for an hour, the palace of a prince, and the pomp which reigns there, without falling into melancholy reflections, and bemoaning the lot of humanity. On the contrary, the prospect of this house, with the uniform and simple life of its inhabitants, diffuse over the mind of the spectator a secret pleasure, which is perpetually increasing. A small number of good-natured people, united by their mutual wants and reciprocal benevolence, concur, by their different employments, in promoting the same end ; every one finding in his situation all that is requisite to contentment, and not desiring to change it, applies himself as if he thought to stay here all his life ; the only ambi-

tion among them being that of properly discharging their respective duties. There is so much moderation in those who command, and so much zeal in those who obey, that equals might agree to distribute the same employments among them, without any one having reason to complain of his lot. No one envies that of another ; no one thinks of augmenting his fortune, but by adding to the common good : the master and mistress estimating their own happiness by that of their domestics and the people about them. One finds here nothing to add or diminish, because here is nothing but what is useful, and that indeed is all that is to be found ; insomuch that nothing is wanted which may not be had, and of that there is always a sufficiency. Suppose, now, to all this were added lace, pictures, lustres, gilding ; in a moment you would impoverish the scene. In seeing so much abundance in things necessary, and no mark of superfluity, one is now apt to think, that if those things were the objects of choice which are not here, they would be had in the same abundance. In seeing also so plentiful a provision made for the poor, one is led to say, this house cannot contain its wealth. This seems to me true magnificence.

Such marks of opulence, however, surprised me, when I first heard what fortune must support it. " You are ruining yourselves (said I

to Mr. and Mrs. Wolmar): it is impossible for moderate revenue can employ so much expence." They smiled, and soon convinced me, that, without retrenching any of their family expences, they could, if they pleased, lay up money, and increase their estate, instead of diminishing it. "Our grand secret to grow rich (said they) is to have as little to do with money as possible, and to avoid as much as may be those intermediate exchanges, which are made between the harvest and the consumption. None of those exchanges are made without some loss; and such losses, if multiplied, would reduce a very good estate to little or nothing, as, by means of brokerage, a valuable gold box may fetch in a sale the price only of a trifling toy. The expence of transporting our produce is avoided, by making use of some part on the spot, and that of exchange, by using others in their natural state. And as for the indispensable necessity of converting those in which we abound for such as we want, instead of making pecuniary bargains, we endeavour to make real exchanges, in which the convenience of both parties, supplies the place of profit."

"I conceive (answered I) the advantages of this method; but it does not appear to me without inconvenience. For, besides the trouble to which it must subject you, the profit must be rather apparent than real, and what you lose in the management of your own estate, probably over-

balances the profits the farmers would make of you. The peasants are better economists, both in the expences of cultivation, and in gathering their produce, than you can be.”—“ That (replied M. Wolmar) is a mistake ; the peasant thinks less of augmenting the produce than of sparing his expences, because the cost is more difficult for him to raise than the profits are useful. The tenant’s view is not so much to increase the value of the land, as to lay out but little on it ; and if he depends on any certain gain, it is less by improving the soil than exhausting it. The best that can happen, is, that, instead of exhausting he quite neglects it. Thus, for the sake of a little ready money, gathered in with ease, an indolent proprietor prepares for himself, or his children, great losses, much trouble, and sometimes the ruin of his patrimony.

“ I do not deny (continued M. Wolmar) that I am at much greater expence in the cultivation of my land than a farmer would be ; but then I myself reap the profit of his labour, and the culture being much better than his, my crop is proportionably larger : so that though I am at a greater expence, I am still, upon the whole, a gainer. Besides, this excess of expence is only apparent, and is, in reality, productive of great economy ; for, were we to let out our lands for others to cultivate, we should be ourselves idle :

we must live in town, where the necessities of life are dear; we must have amusements that would cost us much more than those we take here. The business which you call a trouble, is at once our duty and our delight; and, thanks to the regulation it is under, is never troublesome: on the contrary, it serves to employ us, instead of those destructive schemes of pleasure which people in town run into, and which a country life prevents, whilst that which contributes to our happiness becomes our amusement.

“Look round you (continued he) and you will see nothing but what is useful; yet all these things cost little, and save a world of unnecessary expence. Our table is furnished with nothing but viands of our own growth; our dress and furniture are almost all composed of the manufactures of the country: nothing is despised with us because it is common, nor held in esteem because it is scarce. As every thing that comes from abroad is liable to be disguised and adulterated, we confine ourselves, as well through nicety as moderation, to the choice of the best home commodities, the quality of which is less dubious. Our viands are plain, but choice; and nothing is wanting to make ours a sumptuous table, but the transporting it a hundred leagues off; in which case every thing would be delicate, every thing would be rare, and even our trouts of the lake would be

thought infinitely better, were they to be eaten as Paris.

“ We observe the same rule in the choice of our apparel, which you see is not neglected, but its elegance is the only thing we study, and not its cost, and much less its fashion. There is a wide difference between the price of opinion and the real value. The latter, however, is all that Eloisa regards; in choosing a gown, she inquires not so much whether the pattern be old or new, as whether the stuff be good and becoming. The novelty of it is even sometimes the cause of her rejecting it; especially when it enhances the price, by giving it an imaginary value.

“ You should further consider, that the effect of every thing here arises less from itself than from its use, and its dependences; inasmuch that out of parts worth little, Eloisa has compounded a whole of great value. Taste delights in creating and stamping upon things a value of its own: as the laws of fashion are inconstant and destructive, her's is economical and lasting. What true taste once approves, must be always good, and though it be seldom in the mode, it is, on the other hand, never improper. Thus, in her modest simplicity, she deduces, from the use and fitness of things, such sure and unalterable rules, as will stand their ground when the vanity of fashion is

no more. The abundance of mere necessities can never degenerate into abuse ; for what is necessary has its natural bounds, and our real wants know no excess. One may lay out the price of twenty suits of clothes in buying one, and eat up at a meal the income of a whole year ; but we cannot wear two suits at one time, nor dine twice the same day. Thus, the caprice of opinion is boundless, whereas nature confines us on all sides ; and he, who, with a moderate fortune, contents himself with living well, will run no risk of ruin.

“ Hence you see (continued the prudent Wolmar) in what manner a little economy and industry may lift us out of the reach of fortune. It depends only on ourselves to increase ours, without changing our manner of living ; for we advance nothing but with a view of profit, and whatever we expend, puts us soon in a condition to expend much more.”

And yet, my lord, nothing of all this appears at first sight : the general air of affluence and profusion hides that order and regularity to which it is owing. One must be here some time to perceive those sumptuary laws, which are productive of so much ease and pleasure ; and it is with difficulty that one at first comprehends how they enjoy what they spare. On reflection, however, one's satisfaction increases, because it is plain that the source is inexhaustible, and that the art of en-

joying life, serves at the same time to prolong it. How can any one be weary of a state so conformable to that of nature? How can he waste his inheritance, by improving it every day? How ruin his fortune, by spending only his income? When one year provides for the next, what can disturb the peace of the present? The fruits of their past labour support their present abundance, and those of their present labour provide a future plenty: they enjoy at once what is expended and what is received, and both past and future times unite them in the security of the present.

I have looked into all the particulars of domestic management, and find the same spirit extend itself throughout the whole. All their lace and embroidery are worked in the house; all their cloth is spun at home, or by poor women supported by their charity. The wool is sent to the manufactories of the country, from whence they receive cloth in exchange, for clothing the servants. Their wine, oil, and bread, are all made at home; and they have woods, of which they cut down regularly what is necessary for firing. The butcher is paid in cattle, the grocer in corn, for the nourishment of his family; the wages of the workmen and the servants are paid out of the produce of the lands they cultivate; the rent of their houses in town serves to furnish those they inhabit in the country; the interest of their mo-

ney in the public funds, furnishes a subsistence for the masters, and also the little plate they have occasion for. The sale of the corn and wine which remain, furnishes a fund for extraordinary expences; a fund which Eloisa's prudence will never permit to be exhausted, and which her charity will not suffer to increase. She allows for masters of mere amusements the profits, only, of the labour done in the house, of the grubbing up uncultivated land, of planting trees, &c. Thus the produce and the labour always compensating each other, the balance cannot be disturbed; and it is impossible, from the nature of things, it should be destroyed.

Add to this, that the abstinence which Eloisa imposes on herself, through that voluptuous temperance I have mentioned, is at once productive of new means of pleasure, and new resources of economy. For example, she is very fond of coffee, and when her mother was living, drank it every day. But she has left off that practice, in order to heighten her taste for it, now drinking it only when she has company, or in her favourite dining room, in order to give her entertainment the air of a treat. This is a little indulgence, which is the more agreeable, as it costs her little, and at the same time restrains and regulates her appetite. On the contrary, she studies to discover and gratify the taste of her father and husband with unwearied attention; a charm-

ing prodigality, which makes them like every thing so much the more, for the pleasure they see she takes in providing it. They both love to sit a little after meals, in the manner of the Swiss ; on which occasions, particularly after supper, she seldom fails to treat them with a bottle of wine more old and delicate than common. I was at first deceived by the fine names she gave to her wines, which, in fact, I found to be extremely good ; and, drinking them as wines of the growth of the countries whose names they bore, I took Eloisa to task for so manifest a breach of her own maxims ; but she laughed at me, and put me in mind of a passage in Plutarch, where Flaminius compares the Asiatic troops of Antiochus, distinguished by a thousand barbarous names, to the several ragouts under which a friend of his had disguised one and the same kind of meat. "It is just so (said she) with these foreign wines. The Lisbon, the Sherry, the Malaga, the Champagne, the Syracuse, which you have drunk here with so much pleasure, are all, in fact, no other than wines of this country, and you see from hence the vineyard that produced them. If they are inferior in quality to the celebrated wines whose names they bear, they are also without their inconveniences ; and as one is certain of the materials of which they are composed, they may be drunk with less danger. I have reason to believe (continued she)

that my father and husband like them as well as more scarce and costly wines."—"Eloisa's wines, indeed (says M. Wolmar) to me, have a taste which pleases us better than any others, and that arises from the pleasures she takes in preparing them."—"Then (returned she) they will be always exquisite."

"You will judge whether, amidst such a variety of business, that indolence and want of employment, which makes company, visitings, and such formal society necessary, can find any place here. We visit our neighbours, indeed, just enough to keep up an agreeable acquaintance, but too little to be slaves to each other's company. Our guests are always welcome, but are never invited or entreated. The rule here is to see just so much company as to prevent the losing a taste for retirement, rural occupation supplying the place of amusements: and to him who finds an agreeable and peaceful society in his own family, all other company is insipid. The manner, however, in which we pass our time, is too simple and uniform to tempt many people; but it is the disposition of those who have adopted it, that makes it delightful. How can persons of a sound mind be wearied with discharging the most endearing and pleasing duties of humanity, and with rendering each other's lives mutually happy? Satisfied every night with the transactions of the day, Eloisa wishes for nothing different on the mor-

row. Her constant morning prayer is, that the present day may prove like the past. She is engaged perpetually in the same round of business, because no alteration would give her more pleasure. Thus, without doubt, she enjoys all the happiness of which human life is capable: for is not our being pleased with the continuation of our lot, a certain sign that we are happy. One seldom sees in this place those knots of idle people, which are usually called good company; but then one beholds those who interest our affections infinitely more, such as peaceable peasants, without art, and without politeness; but honest, simple, and contented in their station: old officers retired from the service; merchants wearied with application to business, and tired of growing rich; prudent mothers of families, who bring their children to the school of modesty and good manners: such is the company Eloisa assembles about her. To these her husband sometimes adds some of those adventurers, reformed by age and experience, who, having purchased wisdom at their own cost, return, without reluctance, to cultivate their paternal soil, which they wish they had never left. When any one relates at table the occurrences of their lives, they consist not of the marvellous adventures of the wealthy Sinbad, recounting, in the midst of eastern pomp and effeminacy, how he acquired his vast wealth. Their tales are the simple narratives of men of sense,

who, from the caprice of fortune, and the injustice of mankind, are disgusted with the vain pursuit of imaginary happiness, and have acquired a taste for the objects of true felicity.

Would you believe that even the conversation of peasants hath its charms for these elevated minds, of whom the philosopher himself might be glad to profit in wisdom? The judicious Wolmar discovers in their rural simplicity, more characteristic distinctions, more men that think for themselves, than under the uniform mask worn in great cities, where every one appears what other people are, rather than what he is himself. The affectionate Eloisa finds their hearts susceptible of the smallest offers of kindness, and that they esteem themselves happy in the interest she takes in their happiness. Neither their hearts nor understandings are formed by art; they have not learned to model themselves after the fashion, and are less the creatures of men than those of nature.

M. Wolmar often picks up, in his rounds, some honest old peasant, whose experience and understanding give him great pleasure. He brings him home to Eloisa, by whom he is received in a manner which denotes, not her politeness, or the dignity of her station, but the benevolence and humanity of her character. The good man is kept to dinner; Eloisa placing him next herself, obligingly helping him, and asking kindly af-

ter his family and affairs. She smiles not at his embarrassment, nor takes notice of the rusticity of his manners; but, by the ease of her own behaviour, frees him from all restraint, maintaining throughout that tender and affectionate respect which is due to an infirm old age, honoured by an irreproachable life. The venerable old man is enraptured, and, in the fulness of heart, seems to experience again the vivacity of youth. In drinking healths to a young and beautiful lady, his half-frozen blood grows warm; and he begins to talk of former times, the days of his youth, his amours, the campaigns he has made, the battles he has been in, of the magnanimity and feats of his fellow-soldiers, of his return to his native country, of his wife, his children, his rural employments, the inconveniences he has remarked, and the remedies he thinks may be applied to remove them: during which long detail he often lets fall some excellent moral, or useful lesson in agriculture, the dictates of age and experience; but be there even nothing in what he says, so long as he takes a pleasure in saying it, Eloisa would take a pleasure in hearing it.

After dinner, she retires into her own apartment, to fetch some little present for the wife or daughter of the good old man. This is presented to him by the children, who in return receive some trifle of him, with which she had secretly provided him for that purpose. Thus she initi-

ates them betimes to that intimate and pleasing benevolence, which knits the bond of society between persons of different conditions. The children are accordingly accustomed to respect old age, to esteem simplicity of manners, and to distinguish merit in all ranks of people. The young peasants, on the other hand, seeing their fathers thus entertained at a gentleman's house, and admitted to the master's table, take no offence at being themselves excluded ; they think such exclusion not owing to their rank, but their age ; they do not say, we are too poor, but we are too young, to be thus treated. Thus the honour done to their aged parents, and their hope of one day enjoying the same distinction, make them amends for being debarred from it at present, and excite them to become worthy of it. At his return home to his cottage, their delighted guest impatiently produces the presents he has brought his wife and children, who are overjoyed at the honour done them ; the good old man, at the same time, eagerly relating to them the reception he met with, the dainties he has eaten, the wines he has tasted, the obliging discourse and conversation, the affability of the gentlefolks, and the assiduity of the servants ; in the recital of all which he enjoys it a second time, and the whole family partake of the honour done to their head. They join in concert to bless that illustrious house, which affords at once an example to the

rich, and an asylum for the poor, and whose generous inhabitants disdain not the indigent, but do honour to grey hairs. Such is the incense that is pleasing to benevolent minds ; and if there be any prayers to which Heaven lends a gracious ear, they are, certainly, not those which are offered up by meanness and flattery, in the hearing of the person prayed for, but such as the grateful and simple heart dictates in secret, beneath its own roof.

It is thus that agreeable and affectionate sentiments give charms to a life insipid to indifferent minds : it is thus that business, labour, and retirement become amusing by the art of managing them. A sound mind knows how to take delight in vulgar employments, as a healthful body relishes the most simple aliments. All those indolent people who are diverted with so much difficulty, owe their disgust to their vices, and lose their taste for pleasure only with that of their duty. As to Eloisa, it is directly contrary ; the employment which a certain languor of mind made her formerly neglect, becomes now interesting from the motive that excites to it. One must be totally insensible, to be always without vivacity. She formerly sought solitude and retirement, in order to indulge her reflections on the object of her passion ; at present she has acquired new activity, by having formed new and different connexions. She is not one of those indolent mothers of a fa-

mily, who are contented to study their duty when they should discharge it, and lose their time in inquiring after the business of others, which they should employ in dispatching their own. Eloisa practises at present what she learnt long ago.— Her time for reading and study has given place to that of action. As she rises an hour later than her husband, so she goes an hour later to bed.— This hour is the only time she employs in study; for the day is not too long for the various business in which she is engaged.

This, my lord, is what I had to say to you concerning the economy of this house, and of the retired life of those who govern it. Contented in their station, they peaceably enjoy its conveniences; satisfied with their fortune, they seek not to augment it for their children, but to leave them, with an inheritance they themselves received, an estate in good condition, affectionate servants, a taste for employment, order, moderation, and for every thing that can render delightful and agreeable to men of sense the enjoyment of a moderate fortune, as prudently preserved as honestly acquired.

L E T T E R CXXXIX.

TO LORD B——.

WE have had visitors for some days past. They left us yesterday, and we renewed that agreeable

society subsisting between us three, which is by so much the more delightful, as there is nothing, even in the bottom of our hearts, that we desire to hide from each other. What a pleasure do I take in resuming a new being which renders me worthy of your confidence ! At every mark of esteem which I receive from Eloisa and her husband, I say to myself with an air of self-sufficiency, At length I may venture to appear before Lord B—. It is with your assistance, it is under your eyes, that I hope to do honour to my present situation by my past follies. If an extinguished passion casts the mind into a state of dejection, a passion subdued adds to the consciousness of victory a new elevation of sentiment, a more lively attachment to all that is sublime and beautiful. Shall I lose the fruit of a sacrifice which hath cost me so dear ? No, my lord ; I feel that, animated by your example, my heart is going to profit by all those arduous sentiments it has conquered. I feel that it was necessary for me to be what I was, in order for me to become what I am.

After having thrown away six days in frivolous conversation with persons indifferent to us, we passed yesterday morning, after the manner of the English, in company and silence ; tasting at once the pleasure of being together and the sweetness of self-recollection. How small a part of mankind know any thing of the pleasures of this situation ! I never saw a person in France who had the least idea of it.

The conversation of friends, say they, can never be exhausted. It is true, the tongue may easily find words for common attachments : but friendship, my lord, friendship ! thou animating celestial sentiment ! what language is worthy of thee ? What tongue presumes to be thy interpreter ? Can any thing spoken to a friend equal what is felt in his company ? Good God ! how many things are conveyed by a squeeze of the hand, by an animating look, by an eager embrace, by a sigh that rises from the bottom of the heart ? And how cold in comparison is the first word which is spoken after that ! I shall never forget the evenings I passed at Besançon ; those delightful moments sacred to silence and friendship.—Never, O B—— ! thou noblest of men ! sublimest of friends ! No, never have I undervalued what you then did for me ; never have my lips presumed to mention it. It is certain that this state of contemplation affords the greatest delight to susceptible minds. But I have always observed that impertinent visitors prevent one from enjoying it, and that friends ought to be by themselves, to be at liberty to say nothing. At such a time one should be, if one may use the expression, collected in each other : the least avocation is destructive, the least constraint is insupportable. It is then so sweet to pronounce the dictates of the heart without restraint. It seems as if one dared to think freely only of what one can as

freely speak; it seems as if the presence of a stranger restrained the sentiment, and compressed those hearts which could so fully dictate themselves alone.

Two hours passed away in this silent ecstasy, more delightful a thousand times than the frigid repose of the deities of Epicurus. After breakfast, the children came, as usual, into the apartment of Eloisa, who, instead of retiring, and shutting herself up with them in the work-room, according to custom, kept them with her, as if to make them some amends for the time they had lost without seeing us; and we none of us parted till dinner. Harriet, who begins to know how to handle her needle, sat at work before Fanny, who was weaving lace, and rested her cushion on the back of her little chair. The two boys were busy at a table, turning over the leaves of a book of prints, the subject of which the eldest explained to the younger, Harriet, who knew the whole by heart, being attentive to and correcting him when wrong: and sometimes pretending to be ignorant what figures they were at, she made it a pretence to rise, and go backwards and forwards from the chair to the table. During these little lessons, which were given and taken with little pains and less restraint, the younger boy was playing with some counters which he had secreted under the book. Mrs. Wolmar was at work on some embroidery near the window, op-

posite the children, and her husband and I were still sitting at the tea-table, reading the Gazette, to which she gave but little attention. But when we came to the article which mentions the illness of the king of France, and the singular attachment of his people, unequalled by any thing but that of the Romans for Germanicus, she made some reflexions on the disposition of that affectionate and benevolent nation, whom all the world hate, whilst they have no hatred to any one; adding, that she envied only a sovereign the power of making himself beloved. To this her husband replied, "You have no need to envy a sovereign, who have so long had us all for your subjects." On which she turned her head, and cast a look on him so affecting and tender, that it struck me prodigiously. She said nothing indeed; for what could she say equal to such a look? Our eyes met: and I could perceive, by the manner in which her husband pressed my hand, that the same emotion had effected us all three, and that the delightful influence of her expansive heart diffused itself around, and triumphed over insensibility itself.

We were thus disposed when that silent scene began, of which I just now spoke: you may judge that it was not the consequence of coldness or chagrin. It was first interrupted by the little management of the children; who, nevertheless, as soon as we left off speaking, moderated

their prattle, as if afraid of disturbing the general silence. The little teacher was the first that lowered her voice, made signs to the other, and ran about on tip-toe, while their play became the more diverting by this light constraint. This scene, which seemed to present itself in order to prolong our tenderness, produced its natural effect.

Ammutifcon le lingue, e parlan l'alme.

Our hearts conversing while our tongues were mute.

How many things may be said without opening one's lips ! How warm the sentiments that may be communicated, without the cold interposition of speech ! Eloisa insensibly permitted her attention to be engaged by the same object. Her eyes were fixed on the three children; and her heart, ravished with the most enchanting ecstasy, animated her charming features with all the affecting sweetness of maternal tenderness.

Thus given up to this double contemplation, Wolmar and I were indulging our reveries, when the children put an end to them. The eldest, who was diverting himself with the prints, seeing the counters prevented his brother from being attentive, took an opportunity, when he had piled them up, to give them a knock, and throw them down on the floor. Marcellin fell a crying; and Eloisa, without troubling herself to quiet him, bid Fanny pick up the counters. The child

was immediately hushed; the counters were nevertheless not brought him, nor did he begin to cry again, as I expected. This circumstance, which, however, was nothing in itself, recalled to my mind a great many others, to which I had given no attention; and when I think of them, I do not remember ever to have seen children, with so little speaking to, give so little trouble. They hardly ever are out of the mother's sight, and yet one can hardly perceive they are in company. They are lively and playful, as children of their age should be, but never clamorous or teasing; they are already discreet before they know what discretion is. But what surprises me most is, that all this appears to be brought about of itself; and that with such an affectionate tenderness for her children, Eloisa seems to give herself so little concern about them. In fact, one never sees her very earnest to make them speak or hold their tongues, to make them do things or let them alone. She never disputes with them; she never contradicts them in their amusements: so that one would be apt to think she contented herself with seeing and loving them; and that when they have passed the day with her, she had discharged the whole duty of a mother towards them.

But, though this peaceable tranquillity appears more agreeable in contemplation than the restless solicitude of other mothers, yet I was not

a little surprised at an apparent indolence, so little agreeable to her character. I would have had her even a little discontented amidst so many reasons to the contrary; so well-dost a superstitious activity become maternal affection! I would willingly have attributed the goodness of the children to the care of the mother; and should have been glad to have observed more faults in them, that I might have seen her more solicitous to correct them.

Having busied myself with these reflections a long time in silence, I at last determined to communicate them to her. "I see (said I, one day) that Heaven rewards virtuous mothers in the good disposition of their children; but the best disposition must be cultivated. Their education ought to begin from the time of their birth. Can there be a time more proper to form their minds, than when they have received no impression that need to be effaced? If you give them up to themselves in their infancy, at what age do you expect them to be docile? While you have nothing else to teach them, you ought to teach them obedience."—"Why, (returned she) do my children disobey me?"—"That were difficult (said I) as you lay no commands upon them." On this she looked at her husband, and smiled; then taking me by the hand, she led me into the

VOL. III. N

closet, that we might converse without being overheard by the children.

Here, explaining her maxims at leisure, she discovered to me, under that air of negligence, the most vigilant attention of maternal tenderness. "I was a long time (said she) of your opinion with regard to the premature instruction of children; and while I expected my first child, was anxious concerning the obligations I should soon have to discharge. I used often to speak to M. Wolmar on that subject. What better guide could I take than so sensible an observer, in whom the interest of a father was united to the indifference of a philosopher? He fulfilled, and indeed surpassed my expectations. He soon made me sensible, that the first and most important part of education, precisely that which all the world neglects*, is that of preparing a child to receive instruction.

"The common error of parents, who pique themselves on their own knowledge, is to suppose their children capable of reasoning as soon as they are born, as to talk to them as if they were grown persons before they can speak. Reason is the instrument they use, whereas every other means ought first to be used, in order to

* Locke himself, the sagacious Locke, has forgot it, instructing us rather in the things we ought to require of our children, than in the means of obtaining them.

form their reason ; for it is certain, that of all the knowledge which men acquire, or are capable of acquiring, the art of reasoning is the last and most difficult to learn. By talking to them at so early an age, in a language they do not understand, they learn to be satisfied with mere words ; to talk to others in the same manner ; to contradict every thing that is said to them ; to think themselves as wise as their teachers : and all that one thinks to obtain by reasonable motives is, in fact, acquired only by those of fear or vanity.

“ The most consummate patience would be wearied out, by endeavouring to educate a child in this manner ; and thus it is, that fatigued and disgusted with the perpetual importunity of children, their parents, unable to support the noise and disorder they themselves have given rise to, are obliged to part with them, and to deliver them over to the care of a master ; as if one could expect in a preceptor more patience and good nature than in a father.

“ Nature (continued Eloisa) would have children be children before they are men. If we attempt to pervert that order, we produce only forward fruit ; which has neither maturity nor flavour, and will soon decay ; we raise young professors and old children. Infancy has a manner of perceiving, thinking, and feeling peculiar

to itself. Nothing is more absurd than to think of submitting our's in its stead; and I would as soon expect a child of mine to be five feet high, as to have a mature judgment at ten years old.

“The understanding does not begin to form itself till after some years, and when the corporeal organs have acquired a certain consistence. The design of nature is, therefore, evidently to strengthen the body before the mind is exercised. Children are always in motion; rest and reflection is inconsistent with their age; a studious and sedentary life would prevent their growth, and injure their health; neither their body nor mind can support restraint. Shut up perpetually in a room with their books, they lose their vigour, become delicate, feeble, sickly, rather stupid than reasonable; and their minds suffer during their whole lives, from the weakness of their bodies.

“But, supposing such premature instruction were as profitable as it is really hurtful to their understandings, a very great inconvenience would attend the application of it to all indiscriminately, without regard to the particular genius of each. For, besides the constitution common to its species, every child at his birth possesses a peculiar temperament, which determines its genius and character; and which it is improper either to pervert or restrain; the business of education being only to model and bring it to perfection. All these characters are, according to M. Wol-

mar, good in themselves : for Nature, says he, makes no mistakes*. All the vices imputed to malignity of disposition are only the effect of the bad form it had received. According to him, there is not a villain upon earth, whose natural propensity, well directed, might not have been productive of great virtues ; nor is there a wrong head in being, that might not have been of use to himself and society, had his natural talents taken a certain bias ; just as deformed and monstrous images are rendered beautiful and proportionable, by placing them in a proper point of view. Every thing (says he) tends to the common good in the universal system of nature. Every man has his place assigned in the best order and arrangement of things ; the business is to find out that place, and not to disturb such order. What must be the consequence then of an education begun in a cradle, and carried on always in the same manner, without regard to the vast diversity of temperaments and genius in mankind ? Useless or hurtful instructions would be given to the greater part, while at the same time they are deprived of such as would be most useful and convenient ; nature would be confined on every side, and the greatest qualities of the mind de-

* This doctrine, so true in itself, surprises me, as adopted by M. Wolmar ; the reason of it will be seen presently.

faced, in order to substitute in their place mean and little ones, of no utility. By using indiscriminately the same means with different talents, the one serves to deface the other, and all are confounded together. Thus, after a great deal of pains thrown away in spoiling the natural endowments of children, we presently see those transitory and frivolous ones of education decay and vanish, while those of nature, being totally obscured, appear no more; and thus we lose at once, both what we have pulled down, and what we have raised up. In a word, in return for so much pains indiscreetly taken, all these little prodigies become wits without sense, and men without merit, remarkable only for their weakness and insignificancy."

"I understand your maxims (said I to Eloisa), but I know not how to reconcile them with your own opinion on the little advantage arising from the display of the genius and natural talents of individuals, either respecting their own happiness or the real interest of society. Would it not be infinitely better to form a perfect model, by animating one, restraining another, by regulating its passions, improving its understanding, and thus correcting nature!"—"Correcting nature!" (says M. Wolmar, interrupting me) that is a very fine expression; but, before you make use of it, pray reply to what Eloisa has already advanced."

The most significant reply, as I thought, was

to deny the principle on which her arguments were founded; which I accordingly did. "You suppose (said I) that the diversity of temperament and genius which distinguish individuals is the immediate work of nature; whereas nothing is less evident. For, if our minds are naturally different, they must be unequal; and if nature has made them unequal, it must be by enduing some, in preference to others, with a more refined perception, a greater memory, or a greater capacity of attention. Now, as to perception and memory, it is proved by experience that their different degrees of extent or perfection, are not the standard of genius and abilities; and as to a capacity of attention, it depends solely on the force of the passions by which we are animated; and it is also proved that all mankind are by nature susceptible of passions strong enough to excite in them that degree of attention necessary to a superiority of genius.

"If a diversity of genius, therefore, instead of being derived from nature, be the effect of education; that is to say, of the different ideas and sentiments which objects excite in us during our infancy, of the various circumstances in which we are engaged, and of all the impressions we receive; so far should we be from waiting to know the character of a child before we give it education, that we should, on the contrary, be in

hale to form its character by giving it a proper education."

To this he replied, that it was not his way to deny the existence of any thing, because he could not explain it. "Look (says he) upon those two dogs in the court-yard. They are of the same litter; they have been fed and trained together; have never been parted; and yet one of them is a brisk, lively, good-natured, docible cur; while the other is lumpish, heavy, cross-grained, and incapable of learning any thing. Now, their difference of temperament, only, can have produced in them that of character, as the difference of our interior organization produces in us that of our minds: in every other circumstance they have been alike."—"Alike! (interrupted I); what a vast difference may there not have been, though unobserved by you? How many minute objects may have acted on the one, and not on the other! How many little circumstances may not have differently affected them, which you have not perceived!"—"Very pretty, indeed (says he); so, I find you reason like the astrologers; who, when two men are mentioned of different fortune, yet born under the same aspect, deny the identity of circumstances. On the contrary, they maintain, that, on account of the rapidity of the heavenly motions, there must have been an immense distance between the themes, in the horoscope, of

the one and the other ; and that, if the precise moment of their births had been carefully noted, the objection had been converted into a proof.

“ But, pray, let us leave these subtleties, and confine ourselves to observation. This may teach us, indeed, that there are characters which are known almost at the birth, and children that may be studied at the breast of their nurse ; but these are of a particular class, and receive their education in beginning to live. As for others, who are later known, to attempt to form their genius before their characters are distinguished, is to run a risk of spoiling what is good in their natural dispositions, and substituting what is worse in its place. Did not your master Plato maintain, that all the art of man, that all philosophy could not extract from the human mind what nature had not implanted there ; as all the operations in chemistry are incapable of extracting from any mixture more gold than is already contained in it ? This is not true of our sentiments or our ideas ; but it is true of our disposition, or capacity of acquiring them. To change the genius, one must be able to change the interior organization of the body ; to change a character, one must be capable of changing the temperament on which it depends. Have you ever heard of a passionate man’s becoming patient and temperate, or of a frigid methodical genius having acquired a spi-

rited imagination? For my own part, I think it would be just as easy to make a fair man brown, or a blockhead a man of sense. It is in vain then to attempt to model different minds by one common standard. One may restrain, but we can never change them : one may hinder men from appearing what they are, but can never make them really otherwise ; and, though they disguise their sentiments in the ordinary commerce of life, you will see them re-assume their real characters on every important occasion. Besides, our business is not to change the character and alter the natural disposition of the mind ; but, on the contrary, to improve and prevent its degenerating ; for by these means it is that a man becomes what he is capable of being, and that the work of nature is completed by education. Now, before any character can be cultivated, it is necessary that it should be studied ; and that we should patiently wait its opening ; that we should furnish occasions for it to display itself ; and that we should forbear doing any thing, rather than do wrong. To one genius it is necessary to give wings, and to another shackles ; one should be spurred forward, another reigned in ; one should be encouraged, another intimidated ; sometimes both should be checked, and at others assisted. One man is formed to extend human knowledge to the highest degree to another it is even dangerous

to learn to read. Let us wait for the opening of reason; it is that which displays the character, and gives it its true form: it is by that also it is cultivated, and there is no so such thing as education before the understanding is ripe for instruction.

“As to the maxims of Eloisa, which you think opposite to this doctrine, I see nothing in them contradictory to it: on the contrary, I find them, for my own part, perfectly compatible. Every man at his birth brings into the world with him a genius, talents, and character peculiar to himself. Those who are destined to live a life of simplicity in the country, have no need to display their talents in order to be happy: their unexerted faculties are like the gold mines of the Valais, which the public good will not permit to be opened. But in a more polished society, where the head is of more use than the hands, it is necessary that all the talents nature hath bestowed on men should be exerted; that they should be directed to that quarter in which they can proceed the farthest: and above all, that their natural propensity should be encouraged by every thing which can make it useful. In the first case, the good of the species only is consulted; every one acts in the same manner; example is their only rule of action; habit their only talent; and no one exerts any other genius than that

which is common to all: whereas, in the second case, we consult the interest and capacity of individuals; if one man possess any talent superior to another, it is cultivated and pursued as far as it will reach; and if a man be possessed of adequate abilities, he may become the greatest of his species. These maxims are so little contradictory, that they have been put in practice in all ages. Instruct not, therefore, the children of the peasant, nor the citizen, for you know not as yet what instruction is proper for them. In every case, let the body be formed, till the judgment begins to appear: then is the time for cultivation."

"All this would seem very well (said I) if I did not see one inconvenience, very prejudicial to the advantages you promise yourself from this method; and this is, that children thus left to themselves will get many bad habits, which can be prevented only by teaching them good ones. You may see such children readily contract all the bad practices they perceive in others, because such examples are easily followed, and never imitate the good ones, which would cost them more trouble. Accustomed to have every thing, and to do as they please on every occasion, they become mutinous, obstinate, and untractable."—"But (interrupted M. Wolmar) it appears to me that you have remarked the contrary in our's, and that this remark has given rise to this conversation."—"I must confess (answered I) this

is the very thing which surprises me. What can Eloisa have done to make them so tractable? What method hath she taken to bring it about? What has she substituted instead of the yoke of discipline?"—"A yoke much more inflexible (returned he immediately) that of necessity; but, in giving you an account of her conduct, you will be better able to comprehend her views." He then engaged Eloisa to explain her method of education; which, after a short pause, she did, in the following manner:

"Happy, my dear friend, are those who are well-born! I lay not so great a stress as M. Wolmar does on my own endeavours. I doubt much, notwithstanding his maxims, that a good man can ever be made out of a child of a bad disposition and character. Convinced, nevertheless, of the excellence of his method, I endeavoured to regulate my conduct, in the government of my family, in every respect agreeable to him. My first hope is, that I shall never have a child of a vicious disposition; my second, that I shall be able to educate those which God has given me, under the direction of their father, in such a manner, that they may one day have the happiness of possessing his virtues. To this end I have endeavoured to adopt his rules, by giving them a principle less philosophical, and more agreeable to maternal affection; namely, to make my children happy. This was the first prayer of my heart

after I was a mother, and all the business of my life is to effect it. From the first time I held my eldest son in my arms, I have reflected that the state of infancy is almost a fourth part of the longest life; that men seldom pass through the other three fourths; and that it is a piece of cruel prudence to make that first part uneasy, in order to secure the happiness of the rest, which may never come. I reflected, that during the weakness of infancy, nature had oppressed children in so many different ways, that it would be barbarous to add to that oppression the empire of our caprices, by depriving them of a liberty so very much confined, and which they were so little capable of abusing. I resolved, therefore, to lay mine under as little constraint as possible; to leave them to the free exertion of all their little powers; and to suppress in them none of the emotions of nature. By these means I have already gained two great advantages; the one, that of preventing their opening minds from knowing any thing of falsehood, vanity, anger, envy, and, in a word, of all those vices which are the consequences of subjection, and which one is obliged to have recourse to, when we would have children do what nature does not teach: the other is, that they are more at liberty to grow and gather strength, by the continual exercise which instinct directs them to. Accustomed, like the children of peasants, to expose

themselves to the heat and cold, they grow as hardy ; are equally capable of bearing the inclemencies of the weather ; and become more robust, as living more at their ease. This is the way to provide against the age of maturity, and the accidents of humanity. I have already told you, that I dislike that destructive pusillanimity, which, by dint of sollicitude and care, enervates a child, torments it by constant restraint, confines it by a thousand vain precautions, and, in short, exposes it during its whole life to those inevitable dangers it is thus protected from but for a moment ; and thus, in order to avoid catching a few colds while children, men lay up for themselves consumptions, pleurifies, and a world of other diseases.

“ What makes children, left thus to themselves, acquire the ill habits you speak of, is, that not contented with their own liberty, they endeavour to command others, which is owing to the absurd indulgence of too many fond mothers, who are to be pleased only by indulging all the fantastical desires of their children. I flatter myself, my friend, that you have seen in mine nothing like the desire of command and authority even over the lowest domestic ; and that you have seen me countenance as little the false complaisance and ceremony used to them. It is in this point that I think I have taken a new and more certain method to make my children at

once free, easy, obliging, and tractable; and that on a principle the most simple in the world, which is, by convincing them they are but children.

“ To consider the state of infancy in itself, is there a being in the universe more helpless or miserable; that lies more at the mercy of every thing about it; that has more need of pity and protection, than an infant? Does it not seem that, on this account, the first noise which nature directs it to make is that of crying and complaint? Does it not seem, that nature gives it an affecting and tender appearance, in order to engage every one who approaches it to assist its weakness, and relieve its wants? What, therefore, can be more offensive, or contrary to order, than to see a child pert and imperious, commanding every one about him, and assuming impudently the tone of a master over those who, should they abandon him, would leave him to perish? Or can any thing be more absurd than to see parents approve such behaviour, and encourage their children to tyrannize over their nurses, till they are big enough to tyrannize over the parents themselves?

“ As to my part, I have spared no pains to prevent my son's acquiring the dangerous idea of command and servitude, and have never given him room to think himself attended more out of duty than pity. This point is, perhaps, the most dif-

least and important in education; nor can I well explain it, without entering into all those precautions which I have been obliged to take, to suppress in him that instinctive knowledge, which is so ready to distinguish the mercenary services of domestics from the tenderness of maternal solicitude.

"One of my principal methods has been, as I have just observed, to convince him of the impossibility of his subsisting, at his age, without our assistance. After which I had no great difficulty to show him, that, in receiving assistance from others, we lay ourselves under obligations to them, and are in a state of dependence; and that the servants have a real superiority over him, because he cannot do without them, while he, on the contrary, can do them no service: so that, instead of being vain of their attendance, he looks upon it with a sort of humiliation, as a mark of his weakness, and ardently wishes for the time when he shall be big and strong enough to have the honour of serving himself."

"These notions (I said) would be difficult to establish in families, where the father and mother themselves are waited on like children; but in this, where every person has some employment allotted him, even from the master and mistress to the lowest domestic; where the intercourse between them apparently consists only of reciprocal services, I do not think it impossible; but I

am at a loss to conceive how children, accustomed to have their real wants so readily satisfied, can be prevented from expecting the same gratification of their imaginary wants or humours; or how it is that they do not sometimes suffer from the humour of a servant, who may treat their real wants as imaginary ones."

"Oh! my friend (replied Mrs. Wolmar) an ignorant woman may frighten herself at any thing or nothing. But the real wants of children, as well as grown persons, are very few; we ought rather to regard the duration of our ease than the gratifications of a single moment. Do you think, that a child who lies under no restraint can suffer so much from the humour of a governess, under the eye of its mother, as to hurt it? You imagine inconveniencies which arise from vices already contracted, without reflecting that my care has been to prevent such vices from being contracted at all. Women naturally love children; and no misunderstanding would arise between them, except from the desire of one to subject the other to their caprices. Now that cannot happen here, neither on the part of the child, of whom nothing is required, nor on that of the governess, whom the child has no notion of commanding. I have in this acted directly contrary to other mothers, who in appearance would have their children obey the domestics, and in reality require the servants to obey the chil-

dren: here neither of them command nor obey: but the child never meets with more complaisance from any person than he shows for them. Hence, perceiving that he has no authority over the people about him, he becomes tractable and obliging; in seeking to gain the esteem of others, he contracts an affection for them in turn: this is the infallible effect of self-love; and from this reciprocal affection, arising from the notion of equality, naturally result those virtues, which are constantly preached to children, without any effect.

“ I have thought, that the most essential part in the education of children, and which is seldom regarded in the best families, is to make them sensible of their inability, weakness, and dependence, and, as my husband called it, the heavy yoke of that necessity which nature has imposed on our species; and that, not only in order to show them how much is done to alleviate the burden of that yoke, but especially to instruct them betimes in what rank Providence has placed them, that they may not presume too far above themselves, or be ignorant of the reciprocal duties of humanity.

“ Young people, who from their cradle have been brought up in ease and effeminacy, who have been caressed by every one, indulged in all their caprices, and have been used to obtain easily every thing they desired, enter upon the world

with many impertinent prejudices; of which they are generally cured by frequent mortifications, affronts, and chagrin. Now, I would willingly spare my children this second kind of education, by giving them, at first, a just notion of things. I had indeed once resolved to indulge my eldest son in every thing he wanted, from a persuasion that the first impulses of nature must be good and salutary; but I was not long in discovering, that children, conceiving from such treatment that they have a right to be obeyed, depart from a state of nature almost as soon as born; contracting our vices from our example, and theirs by our indiscretion. I saw that if I indulged him in all his humours, they would only increase by such indulgence; that it was necessary to stop at some point, and that contradiction would be the more mortifying, as he should be less accustomed to it: but that it might be less painful to him, I began to use him to it by degrees; and in order to prevent his tears and lamentations, I made every denial irrevocable. It is true, I contradict him as little as possible, and never without due consideration. Whatever is given or permitted him is done unconditionally, and at the first instance; and in this we are indulgent enough: but he never gets any thing by importunity, neither his tears nor entreaties being of any effect. Of this he is now so well convinced, that he makes no use of them; he goes his

way on the first word, and frets himself no more at seeing a box of sweetmeats taken away from him; than at seeing a bird fly away; which he would be glad to catch; there appearing to him the same impossibility of having the one as the other; and so far from beating the chairs and tables, that he dares not lift his hand against those who oppose him. In every thing that displeases him, he feels the weight of necessity; the effect of his own weakness, but never—excuse me a moment (says she) seeing I was going to reply; I foresee your objection, and am coming to it immediately.

“The great cause of the ill-humour of children, is the care which is taken either to quiet or to aggravate them. They will sometimes cry for an hour, for no other reason in the world than because they perceive we would not have them. So long as we take notice of their crying; so long have they a reason for continuing to cry; but they will soon give over of themselves, when they see no notice is taken of them: for, old or young, nobody loves to throw away his trouble. This is exactly the case with my eldest boy, who was once the most peevish little bawler, stunning the whole house with his cries: whereas, now you can hardly hear there is a child in the house. He cries, indeed, when he is in pains; but then it is the voice of nature, which should never be restrained; and he is hushed again as soon as

ever the pain is over. For this reason I pay great attention to his tears, as I am certain he never sheds them for nothing : and hence I have gained the advantages of being certain when he is in pain and when not ; when he is well and when sick ; an advantage which is lost with those who cry out of mere humour, and only in order to be appeased. I must confess, however, that this management is not to be expected from nurses and governesses : for, as nothing is more tiresome than to hear a child cry, and as these good women think of nothing but the time present, they do not foresee, that by quieting it to-day it will cry the more to-morrow. But what is still worse, this indulgence produces an obstinacy, which is of more consequence as the child grows up. The very cause that makes it a squaller at three years of age, will make it stubborn and refractory at twelve, quarrelsome at twenty, imperious and insolent at thirty, and insupportable all its life.

“ I come now to your objection (added she, smiling). In every indulgence granted to children, they can easily see our desire to please them, and therefore they should be taught to suppose we have reason for refusing or complying with their requests. This is another advantage gained by making use of authority, rather than persuasion, on every necessary occasion. For, as it is impossible they can always be blind to our motives, it

is natural for them to imagine that we have some reason for contradicting them, of which they are ignorant. On the contrary, when we have once submitted to their judgment, they will pretend to judge of every thing; and thus become cunning, deceitful, fruitful in shifts and chicanery, endeavouring to silence those who are weak enough to argue with them: for, when one is obliged to give them an account of things above their comprehension, they attribute the most prudent conduct to caprice, because they are incapable of understanding it. In a word, the only way to render children docile, and capable of reasoning, is not to reason with them at all; but to convince them, that it is above their childish capacities; for they will always suppose the argument in their favour, unless you can give them good cause to think otherwise. They know very well that we are unwilling to displease them, when they are certain of our affection; and children are seldom mistaken in this particular: therefore, if I deny any thing to my children, I never reason with them; I never tell them why I do so or so; but I endeavour, as much as possible, that they should find it out; and that even after the affair is over. By these means they are accustomed to think that I never deny them any thing without a sufficient reason, though they cannot always see it.

“On the same principle it is, that I never suffer my children to join in the conversation of grown persons, or foolishly imagine themselves upon an equality with them, because they are permitted to prattle. I would have them give a short and modest answer, when they are spoke to, but never to speak of their own head, or ask impertinent questions of persons so much older than themselves, to whom they ought to show more respect.”

“These (interrupted I) are very rigid rules, for so indulgent a mother as Eloisa. Pythagoras himself was not more severe with his disciples: You are not only afraid to treat them like men, but seem to be fearful lest they should too soon cease to be children. By what means can they acquire knowledge more certain and agreeably, than by asking questions of those who know better than themselves? What would the Parisian ladies think of your maxims, whose children are never thought to prattle too much or too long: they judge of their future understanding, by the nonsense and impertinence they utter when young? That may not be amiss, M. Wokmar will tell me, in a country where the merit of the people lies in chattering, and a man has no business to think, if he can but talk. But I cannot understand how Eloisa, who is so desirous of making the lives of her children happy, can reconcile that happiness with so much restraint;

nor amidst so much confinement, what becomes of the liberty with which she pretends to indulge them."

"What (says she, with impatience) do we restrain their liberty, by preventing them from trespassing on ours? And cannot they be happy, truly, without a whole company sitting silent to admire their puerilities? To prevent the growth of their vanity is a surer means to effect their happiness: for the vanity of mankind is the source of their greatest misfortunes, and there is no person so great or so admired, whose vanity has not given him much more pain than pleasure*.

"What can a child think of himself, when he sees a circle of sensible people listening to, admiring, and waiting impatiently for his wit, and breaking out in raptures at every impertinent expression? Such false applause is enough to turn the head of a grown person; judge then what effect it must have upon that of a child. It is with the prattle of children as with the predictions in the Almanack. It would be strange, if, amidst such a number of idle words, chance did not now and then jumble some of them into sense. Imagine the effect which such flattering exclamations must

* If there ever was a man upon earth made happy by his vanity, it is past a doubt that he was a fool.

have on a simple mother, already too much flattered by her own heart. Think not, however, that I am proof against this error, because I expose it. No; I see the fault, and yet am guilty of it. But, if I sometimes admire the repartees of my son, I do it at least in secret. He will not learn to become a vain prater, by hearing me applaud him; nor will flatterers have the pleasure, in making me repeat them, of laughing at my weakness.

“ I remember one day, having company, I went out to give some necessary orders, and on my return found four or five great blockheads busy at play with my boy; they came immediately to tell me, with great rapture, the many pretty things he had been saying to them, and with which they seemed quite charmed. “Gentlemen (said I, coldly,) I doubt not but you know how to make puppets say very fine things; but I hope my children will one day be men, when they will be able to act and talk of themselves; I shall then be always glad to hear what they have said and done well.” Seeing this manner of paying their court did not take, they since play with my children, but not as with Punchinello; and, to say the truth, they are evidently better since they have been less admired.

“ As to their asking questions, I do not prohibit it indiscriminately. I am the first to tell them to ask, softly, of their father or me, what they

desire to know. But I do not permit them to break in upon a serious conversation, to trouble every body with the first piece of impertinence that comes into their heads. The art of asking questions is not quite so easy as may be imagined. It is rather that of a master than of a scholar.— The wise know and enquire, says the Indian proverb, but the ignorant know not even what to inquire after. For want of such previous instruction, children, when at liberty to ask questions as they please, never ask any but such as are frivolous, and answer no purpose, or such difficult ones whose solution is beyond their comprehension. Thus, generally speaking, they learn more by the questions which are asked of them, than from those which they ask of others.

“ But, were this method of permitting them to ask questions as useful as it is pretended to be, is not the first and most important science to them, that of being modest and discreet? And is there any other that should be preferred to this? Of what use then is an unlimited freedom of speech to children, before the age at which it is proper for them to speak? Or the right of impertinently obliging persons to answer their childish questions? These little chattering querists ask questions, not so much for the sake of instruction, as to engage one's notice. This indulgence, therefore, is not so much the way to instruct

them, as to render them conceited and vain ; an inconvenience much greater, in my opinion, than the advantage they gain by it ; for ignorance will by degrees diminish, but vanity will always increase.

“ The worst that can happen from too long a reserve will be, that my son, when he comes to years of discretion, will be less fluent in speech, and may want that volubility of tongue, and multiplicity of words, which he might otherwise have acquired ; but when we consider how much the custom of passing away life in idle prattle impoverishes the understanding, this happy sterility of words appears rather an advantage than otherwise. Shall the organ of truth, the most worthy organ of man, the only one whose use distinguishes him from the brutes, shall this be prostituted to no better purposes than those which are answered as well by the inarticulate sounds of other animals ? He degrades himself even below them when he speaks and says nothing ; a man should preserve his dignity, as such, even in his lightest amusements. If it be thought polite to stun the company with idle prate, I think it a much greater instance of true politeness to let others speak before us ; to pay a greater deference to what is said, than to what we say ourselves ; and to let them see we respect them too much to think they can be entertained by our

nonsense. The good opinion of the world, that which makes us courted and caressed by others, is not obtained so much by displaying our own talents, as by giving others an opportunity of displaying theirs, and by placing our own modesty as a foil to their vanity. You need not be afraid that a man of sense, who is silent only from reserve and discretion, should ever be taken for a fool. It is impossible in any country whatever that a man should be characterised by what he has not said, or that he should be despised for being silent.

“ On the contrary, it may be generally observed that people of few words impose silence on others, who pay an extraordinary attention to what they say, which gives them every advantage of conversation. It is so difficult for the most sensible man to retain his presence of mind, during the hurry of a long discourse; so seldom that something does not escape him, which he afterwards repents of, that it is no wonder if he sometimes chooses to suppress what is pertinent, to avoid the risk of talking nonsense.

“ But there is a great difference between six years of age and twenty; my son will not be always a child, and, in proportion as his understanding ripens, his father designs it shall be exercised. As to my part, my task does not extend so far. I may nurse children, but I have

not the presumption to think of making them men. I hope, (says she, looking at her husband) this will be the employment of more able heads. I am a woman and a mother, and know my place and my duty; hence, I say again, it is not my duty to educate my sons, but to prepare them for being educated.

“Nor do I any thing more in this than pursue the system of M. Wolmar, in every particular; which, the farther I proceed, the more reason I find to pronounce excellent and just. Observe my children, particularly the eldest; have you ever seen children more happy, more cheerful, or less troublesome. You see them jump and laugh, and run about all day, without incommoding any one. What pleasure, what independence, is their age capable of which they do not enjoy, or which they abuse? They are under as little restraint in my presence as when I am absent. On the contrary, they seem always at more liberty under the eye of their mother than elsewhere; and though I am the author of all the severity they undergo, they find me always more indulgent than any body else: for I cannot support the thought of their not loving me better than any other person in the world. The only rules imposed on them in our company are those of liberty itself, viz. they must lay the company under no greater restraint than they themselves are under; they must not cry

louder than we talk ; and as they are not obliged to concern themselves with us, they are not to expect our notice. “ Now if ever they trespass against such equitable rules as these, all their punishment is, to be immediately sent away ; and I make this a punishment, by contriving to render every other place disagreeable to them. Setting this restriction aside, they are, in a manner, quite unrestrained ; we never oblige them to learn any thing ; never tire them with fruitless corrections ; never reprimand them for trifles ; the only lessons which are given them being those of practice. Every person in the house having my directions, is so discreet and careful in this business, that they leave me nothing to wish for ; and, if any defect should arise, my own assiduity would easily repair it.

“ Yesterday, for example, the eldest boy having taken a drum from his brother, set him a crying. Fanny said nothing to him at the time ; but, about an hour after, when she saw him in the height of his amusement, she in her turn took it from him, which set him a crying also. “ What (said she) do you cry for ? You took it just now by force from your brother, and now I take it from you ; what have you to complain of ? Am not I stronger than you ? ” She then began to beat the drum, as if she took pleasure in it. So far all went well till some time after she was

going to give the drum to the younger, but I prevented her, as this was not acting naturally, and might create envy between the brothers. In losing the drum, the youngest submitted to the hard law of necessity; the elder, in having it taken from him, was sensible of injustice: both knew their own weakness, and were in a moment reconciled."

A plan so new, and so contrary to received opinions, at first surprised me. By dint of explanation, however, they at length represented it in so admirable a light, that I was made sensible the path of nature is the best. The only inconvenience which I find in this method, and which appeared to me very great, was to neglect the only faculty which children possess in perfection, and which is only debilitated by their growing into years. Methinks, according to their own system of education, that the weaker the understanding, the more one ought to exercise and strengthen the memory, which is then so proper to be exercised. "It is that (said I) which ought to supply the place of reason. The mind becomes heavy and dull by inaction. The seed takes no root in a soil badly prepared, and it is a strange manner of preparing children to become reasonable, by beginning to make them stupid."—"How! stupid! (cried Mrs. Wolmar immediately.) Do you confound two qualities so different, and al-

most contrary, as memory and judgment*? As if an ill digested and unconnected lumber of things, in a weak head, did not do more harm than good to the understanding. I confess, that of all the faculties of the human mind, the memory is the first which opens itself, and is the most convenient to be cultivated in children: but which, in your opinion should be preferred, that which is most easy for them to learn, or that which is most important for them to know? Consider the use which is generally made to this aptitude, the eternal constraint to which they are subject, in order to display their memory, and then compare its utility to what they are made to suffer. Why should a child be compelled to study languages he will never talk, and that even before he has learnt his own tongue? Why should he be forced incessantly to make and repeat verses he does not understand, and whose harmony all lies at the end of his fingers; or be perplexed to death with circles and triangles, of which he has no idea; or why burdened with an infinity of names of towns and rivers, which he constantly mistakes, and learns anew every day? Is this to cultivate the memory to the improvement of the understanding, or is all such frivolous acquisition

* Here appears to be some little mistake. Nothing is so useful to the judgment as memory: it is true, however, that it is not the remembrance of words.

worth one of those many tears it costs him? Were all this, however, merely useless, I should not so much complain of it; but is it not pernicious to accustom a child to be satisfied with mere words? Must not such a heap of crude and indigested terms and notions be injurious to the formation of those primary ideas with which the human understanding ought first to be furnished? And would it not be better to have no memory at all, than to have it stuffed with such a heap of literary lumber, to the exclusion of necessary knowledge?

“ If nature has given to the brain of children that softness of texture, which renders it proper to receive every impression, it is not proper for us to imprint the names of sovereigns, dates, terms of art, and other insignificant words of no meaning to them while young, nor of any use to them as they grow old; but it is our duty to trace out betimes all those ideas which are relative to the state and condition of humanity, those which relate to their duty and happiness, that they may serve to conduct them through life in a manner agreeable to their being and faculties. The memory of a child may be exercised without poring over books. Every thing he sees, every thing he hears, catches his attention, and is stored up in his memory: he keeps a journal of the actions and conversation of men, and from every scene that presents itself deduces something to enrich his memory. It is in the choice of objects, in the

care to show him such only as he ought to know, and to hide from him those of which he ought to be ignorant, that the true art of cultivating the memory consists.

“ You must not think, however (continued *Eloisa*) that we entirely neglect that care on which you think so much depends. A mother, if she is the least vigilant, holds in her hands the reins over the passions of her children. There are ways and means to excite in them a desire of instruction ; and so far as they are compatible with the freedom of the child, and tend not to sow in them the seeds of vice, I readily employ them, without being chagrined if they are not attended with success : for there is always time enough for knowledge, but not a moment should be lost in forming the disposition. Mr. Wolmar lays, indeed, so great a stress on the first dawnings of reason, that he maintains, though his son should be totally ignorant at twelve years old, he might know not a whit the less at fifteen ; without considering that nothing is less necessary than for a man to be a scholar, and nothing more so than for him to be just and prudent. You know that our eldest reads already tolerably well. I will tell you how he became fond of it : I had formed a design to repeat to him, from time to time, some fable out of *La Fontaine*, and had already begun, when he asked me one day, seriously, if ravens could talk. I saw immediately the difficulty of

making him sensible of the difference between fable and falsehood : and laying aside La Fontaine, got off as well as I could, being from that moment convinced that fables were only proper for grown persons, and that simple truth only should be repeated to children. In the room of La Fontaine, therefore, I substituted a collection of little interesting and instructive histories, taken mostly from the Bible ; and, finding he grew attentive to these tales, I composed others as entertaining as possible, and applicable to present circumstances. These I wrote out fair, in a fine book ornamented with prints, which I kept locked up, except at the times of reading. I read also but seldom, and never long at a time, repeating often the same story, and commenting a little before I passed on to another. When I observed him particularly intent, I pretended to recollect some orders necessary to be given, and left the story unfinished, just in the most interesting part, laying the book down negligently, and leaving it behind me. I was no sooner gone than he would take it up, and go to his Fanny, or somebody else, begging them to read the remainder of the tale ; but as nobody was at his command, and every one had his instructions, he was frequently refused. One would give him a flat denial, another had something else to do, a third muttered it out very low and badly, and a fourth would leave it in the middle, just as I had done before. When we saw him

heartily wearied out with so much dependence, somebody intimated to him to learn to read himself, and then he need not ask any body, but might turn it over at pleasure. He was greatly delighted with the scheme, but where should he find any one obliging enough to instruct him? This was a new difficulty, which we took care, however, not to make too great. In spite of this precaution he was tired out three or four times; but of this I took no other notice, than to endeavour to make my little histories the more amusing, which brought him again to the charge with so much ardour that though it is not six months since he began to learn, he will be very soon able to read the whole collection, without any assistance.

“It is in this manner I endeavour to excite his zeal and inclination to attain such knowledge as requires application and patience; but though he learns to read, he gets no such knowledge from books, for there is no such in the books he reads, nor is the application to it proper for children. I am desirous also of furnishing their heads with ideas, and not with words; for which reason I never set them to get any thing by heart.”——

“Never, (said I, interrupting her!) that is saying a great deal. Surely you have taught him his prayers and his catechism!”——“There you are mistaken (replied she.) As to the article of

prayers, I say mine every morning and evening aloud in the nursery, which is sufficient to teach them, without obliging them to learn. As to their catechism, they know not what it is.”—
“What, Eloisa! your children never learn their catechism!”—“No, my friend, my children do not learn their catechism.”—“Indeed! (said I, quite surprised) so pious a mother!—I really do not comprehend you. Pray what is the reason they do not learn it.”—“The reason is (said she) that I would have them some time or other believe it: I would have them be Christians.”—“I understand you (said I); you would not have their faith consist in mere words; you would have them believe, as well as know, the articles of their religion; and you judge very prudently, that it is impossible for a man to believe what he does not understand.”—“You are very difficult (said M. Wolmar, smiling); pray, were you a Christian by chance?”—“I endeavour to be one (answered I, resolutely). I believe all that I understand of the Christian religion, and respect the rest, without rejecting it.” Eloisa made me a sign of approbation, and we resumed the former subject of conversation; when, after explaining herself on several other subjects, and convincing me of her active and indefatigable maternal zeal, she concluded by observing that her method exactly answered the two objects she proposed, namely, the permitting the natural disposition

and character of her children to discover themselves, and empowering herself to study and examine it.

“ My children (continued she) lie under no manner of restraint, and yet cannot abuse their liberty. Their disposition can neither be depraved nor perverted; their bodies are left to grow, and their judgments to ripen at ease and leisure: subjection debases not their minds, nor does flattery excite their self-love; they think themselves neither powerful men nor enslaved animals, but children, happy and free. To guard them from vices not in their nature, they have, in my opinion, a better preservative than lectures, which they would not understand, or of which they would soon be tired. This consists in the good behaviour of those about them; in the good conversation they hear, which is so natural to them all that they stand in no need of instruction; it consists in the peace and unity of which they are witnesses; in the harmony which is constantly observed, and in the conduct and conversation of every one around them. Nursed hitherto in natural simplicity, whence should they derive those vices, of which they have never seen the example? Whence those passions they have no opportunity to feel, those prejudices which nothing they observe can impress? You see they betray no bad inclination; they have adopted no erroneous notions. Their ignorance is not opi-

nionated ; their desires are not obstinate ; their propensity to evil is prevented, nature is justified, and every thing serves to convince me, that the faults we accuse her of are not those of nature, but our own.

“ It is thus, that, giving up to the indulgence of their own inclinations, without disguise or alteration, our children do not take an external and artificial form, but preserve exactly that of their original character. It is thus that their character daily unfolds itself to observation, and gives us an opportunity to study the workings of nature, even to her most secret principles. Sure of never being reprimanded or punished, they are ignorant of lying or concealing any thing from us : and in whatever they say, whether before us or among themselves, they discover, without restraint, whatever lies at the bottom of their hearts. Being left at full liberty to prattle all day long to each other, they are under no restraint before me. I never check them, enjoin them to silence, or indeed pretend to take notice of what they say, while they talk sometimes very blameably : though I seem to know nothing of the matter. At the same time, however, I listen to them with attention, and keep an exact account of all they say or do : but these are the natural productions of the soil which we are to cultivate. A naughty word in their mouths is a plant or seed foreign to the soil, sown by the vagrant wind : should I cut it

off by a reprimand, it would not fail ere long to shoot forth again. Instead of that, therefore, I look carefully to find its root, and pluck it up. I am only (said she, smiling) the servant of the gardener; I only weed the garden by taking away the vicious plants: it is for him to cultivate the good ones. It must be confessed also, that with all the pains I may take, I ought to be well seconded to succeed, and that such success depends on a concurrence of circumstances, which is perhaps to be met with no where but here. The knowledge and discretion of a sensible father are required to distinguish and point out, in the midst of established prejudices, the true art of governing children from the time of their birth; his patience is required to carry it into execution, without ever contradicting his precepts by his practice; it is necessary that one's children should be happy in their birth, and that nature should have made them amiable; it is necessary to have none but sensible and well-disposed servants about one, who will not fail to enter into the design of their master. One brutal or servile domestic would be enough to spoil all. In short, when one thinks how many adventitious circumstances may injure the best designs, and spoil the best concerted projects, one ought to be thankful to Providence for every thing that succeeds, and to confess that wisdom depends greatly on good fortune."—"Say, rather (replied

I), that good fortune depends on prudence. Do not you see that the concurrence of circumstances, on which you felicitate yourself, is your own doing, and that every one who approaches you is, in a manner, compelled to resemble you? O ye mothers of families! when you complain that your views, your endeavours, are not seconded, how little do you know your own power! Be but what you ought, and you will surmount all obstacles; you will oblige every one about you to discharge their duty, if you but discharge yours. Are not your rights those of nature? In spite of the maxims or practice of vice, these will be always respected by the human heart. Do you but aspire to be women and mothers, and the most gentle empire on earth will be also the most respectable.

In the close of our conversation, Eloisa remarked that her task was become much easier since the arrival of Harriet. "It is certain (said she) I should have had less trouble if I would have excited a spirit of emulation between the brothers. But this step appeared to me too dangerous; I chose, therefore, rather to take more pains, and to run less risk. Harriet has made up for this; for, being of a different sex, their elder, fondly beloved by both, and very sensible for her age, I make a kind of governess of her, and with the more success, as her lessons are less suspected to be such.

“As to herself, her education falls under my care; but the principles on which I proceed are so different, as to deserve a particular explanation. Thus much at least I can say of her already, that it will be difficult to improve on the talents nature has given her, and that her merit is equal to her mother’s, if her mother could possibly have an equal.”

We now, my lord, expect you every day here, so that this should be my last letter. But I understand the reason of your stay with the army, and tremble for the consequence. Eloisa is no less uneasy, and desires you will oftener let her hear from you; conjuring you, at the same time, to think how much you endanger the peace of your friends, by exposing your person. For my part, I have nothing to say to you on this subject. Discharge your duty; the advice of pusillanimity is as foreign from my heart as from yours. I know too well, my dear B——, the only catastrophe worthy of you, is, to lose your life in the service and for the honour of your country; but ought you not to give some account of your days to him who has preserved his only for your sake?

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.



ELOISA,

OR

**A SERIES OF
ORIGINAL LETTERS.**

COLLECTED AND PUBLISHED BY

Jean Jacques
Mr. J. J. ROUSSEAU,

CITIZEN OF GENEVA.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

THE ADVENTURES OF LORD B—— AT ROME.**BEING THE SEQUEL OF ELOISA.**

(Found among the Author's Papers after his Decease.)

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E L O I S A.

LETTER CXL.

FROM LORD B——.

I FIND, by your two last letters, that a former one is missing, apparently the first you wrote me from the army, and in which you accounted for Mrs. Wolmar's secret uneasiness. Not having received that letter, I imagine it was in the mail of one of our couriers, who was taken: you will, therefore, be pleased to recommunicate its contents. I am at a loss to conjecture what they were, and am uneasy about them. For, again I say, if happiness and peace dwell not in Eloisa's mind, I know not where they will find an asylum on earth. You may make her easy as to the dangers she imagines we are here exposed to; we have to do with an enemy too expert to suffer us to pursue him. With a handful of men, he baffles our attempts, and deprives us of all opportunity to attack him. As we are very sanguine, however, we may probably raise difficulties which the best generals would not be able to surmount, and at length oblige the French to fight us. I foresee our first success will cost us dear, and that the victory we gained at Dettingen will make us

lose one in Flanders. We make head against a very able commander. Nor is this all; he possesses the love and confidence of his troops, and the French soldiers, when they have a good opinion of their leader, are *invincible**. On the contrary, they are good for so little when they are commanded by courtiers they despise, that frequently their enemies need only to watch the intrigues of the cabinet, and seize a proper opportunity to vanquish with certainty the bravest people on the continent: this they very well know. The Duke of Marlborough, taking notice of the good look and martial air of a French soldier, taken prisoner at the battle of Blenheim, told him, "If the French army had been composed of fifty thousand such men as he, it would not have been so easily beaten:"—"Zounds, Sir, (replied the grenadier), there are men enough in it like me, but it wants such a man as you." Now, such a man at present commands the French troops, and is on our side wanting; but we have courage, and trouble ourselves little about that. At all events, however, I intend to see their operations for the remainder of the campaign, and am resolved not to leave the army till it goes into winter-quarters. We shall all be

* The translator cannot help observing, that it was extraordinary in M. Rousseau to put such a false, ridiculous assertion in the mouth of an Englishman.

gainers by such a delay: the season being too far advanced for us to think of crossing the mountains this year, I shall spend the winter with you, and not go to Italy till the beginning of the spring. Tell Mr. and Mrs. Wolmar I have thus changed my design, that I may have more time to contemplate that affecting picture you so pathetically describe, and that I may have also the opportunity to see Mrs. Orbe settled with them. Continue, my dear Sir, to write with your usual punctuality, and you will do me a greater pleasure than ever: my equipage having been taken by the enemy, I have no books, but amuse myself in reading over your letters.

LETTER CXLI.

TO LORD B——.

WHAT pleasure does your lordship give me, in acquainting me with your design of passing the winter with us at Clarens! but how dearly you make me pay for it by prolonging your stay at the army! What displeases me most, however, is to perceive that your resolution of making a campaign was fixed before we parted, though you mentioned nothing of it to me. I see, my lord, your reason for keeping it a secret, and cannot be pleased with you for it. Did you despise me so

much as to think me unfit to accompany you? or have you ever known me mean enough to be attached to any thing I should prefer to the honour of dying with my friend? But, if it was improper for me to follow you to the army, you should at least have left me in London; that would have displeased me less than your sending me hither.

By your last letter, I am convinced that one of mine is indeed missing; the loss of which must have rendered the two succeeding ones in many respects obscure; but the necessary explanations to make them intelligible shall be soon transmitted to you. What is at present more particularly needful, is to remove your uneasiness concerning that of Mrs. Wolmar.

I shall not take upon me to give you a regular continuation of the discourse we had together after the departure of her husband. Many things have since intervened that make me forget great part of it, and it was resumed at so many different times during his absence, that I shall content myself, to avoid repetition, with giving you a summary of the whole.

In the first place, she told me, that M. Wolmar, who neglected nothing in his power to make her happy, was nevertheless the sole author of all her disquietude: and that the more sincere their mutual attachment grew, the greater was her affliction. Would you think it my lord? This gentleman, so prudent, so reasonable, so

little addicted to any kind of vice, so little subject to the tyranny of human passions, knows nothing of that faith which gives virtue all its merit; and in the innocence of an irreproachable life, feels only at the bottom of his heart the dreadful tranquillity of the unbeliever. The reflection which arises from this contrast in principle and morals serves but to aggravate Eloisa's grief; she would think him even less culpable in disregarding the Author of his being, had he more reason to dread his anger, or presumption to brave his power: That the guilty should be led to appease their consciences at the expence of truth; that the pride of thinking differently from the vulgar may induce others to embrace error, she can readily conceive; but (continued she, sighing), how a man so virtuous, and so little vain of his understanding, should be an infidel, surpasses my conception!

But, before I proceed farther, it will be necessary to inform you of the peculiar character of this married couple. You are to conceive them as living solely for each other, and constantly taken up with their family; it being necessary to know the strictness of the union subsisting between them, to comprehend how their difference of sentiments in this one article is capable of disturbing it. M. Wolmar, educated in the customs of the Greek church, was not one of those who

could support the absurdity of such ridiculous worship. His understanding, superior to the feeble yoke imposed on it, soon shook it off with contempt; rejecting, at the same time, every thing offered to his belief on such doubtful authority: thus forced, in a manner, into impiety, he degenerates into atheism.

Having resided ever since in Roman Catholic countries, he has never been induced to a better opinion of Christianity by what he found professed there. Their religion, he saw, tended only to the interest of their priests; that it consisted entirely of ridiculous grimaces, and a jargon of words without meaning. He perceived that men of sense and probity were unanimously of his opinion, and that they did not scruple to say so; nay, that the clergy themselves, under the rose, ridiculed in private what they inculcated and taught in public; hence he has often assured me, that, after having taken much time and pains in the search, he never met with above three priests in his life that believed a God*.

* God forbid that I should give sanction to assertions so rash and severe; I insinuate only, that there are people who make such assertions, and for whose indiscretion, the conduct of the clergy in every country, and of all religions, often gives but too much occasion. So far am I, however, from intending meanly to screen myself by this note, that my real opinion on this subject is, that no true believer can be a persecutor, and an enemy to toleration.

By endeavouring to set himself to rights in these matters, he afterwards bewildered himself in metaphysical inquiries; and seeing only doubts and contradictions offer themselves on every side, advanced so far, that when he returned to the doctrines of Christianity, he came too late; and, incapable of either belief or conviction, the best arguments appeared to him inconclusive. He finished his career, therefore, by equally opposing all religious tenets whatever; and was converted from atheism only to become a sceptic.

Such is the husband which Heaven has destined to Eloisa, to her whose true faith and sincere piety cannot have escaped your observation; but to know how much her gentle soul is naturally inclined to devotion, requires that long intimacy with her in which her cousin and I have lived. It might be said, no terrestrial object being equal to her tenderness, her excess of sensibility is reduced to ascend to its source: not like a saint Theresa, whose amorous heart only changes its object: her's is a heart truly inexhaustible, which neither love nor friendship can drain; but whose affections are still raised to the only being worthy

If I were a magistrate, and the law inflicted death on atheists, I would begin to put it in execution, by burning the first man who should come to accuse and persecute another.

her ardent love*. Her love to God does not detach her from his creatures; it gives her neither severity nor spleen. But all her affections proceeding from the same cause, and tempering each other, become more sweet and attracting; she would, I believe, be less devout, if her love towards her husband, her children, her cousin, and me, were less than it is. What is very singular also, is, that she knows but little of her own heart; and even complains that she finds in herself a soul barren of tenderness and incapable of love to the sublimest object.—“Do what you will (she often says) the heart is affected only by the interposition of the senses, or the assistance of the imagination; and how shall we see or imagine the immensity of the Supreme Being†?

* How! Will the Deity take up with only the refuse of his creatures? Not so; all the love the human heart can possess for created beings is so little, that when they think it is replete, it is yet vacant; an infinite object only can possess it entirely.

† It is certain, the mind must be fatigued by the unequal task of contemplating the Deity. Such ideas are too sublime for the vulgar, who require a more sensible object of devotion. Are the Catholics to blame then in filling their legends, their calendars, and their churches, with little angels, cherubs, and handsome saints? The infant Jesus, in the arms of his modest and beautiful mother, is one of the most affecting, and, at the same time, the most agreeable spectacles that Christian devotion can present to the view of the faithful.

When I would raise myself up to the Deity, I know no longer where I am: perceiving no relation between us, I know not how to reach him; I neither see nor feel any thing; I drop into a kind of annihilation; and, if I may venture to judge of others by myself, I should apprehend the ecstasies of the mystics are no less owing to the fullness of the heart than the emptiness of the head.

“What must I do then (added she) to get rid of these delusions of a wandering mind? I substitute a less refined worship, but within the reach of my comprehension, in the room of those sublime contemplations which surpass my mental faculties. With regret I debase the majesty of the Divinity, and interpose perceptible objects between the Deity and my feeble senses: not being able to contemplate his essence, I contemplate at least his works, and admire his goodness; but whatever method I take, instead of that pure love and affection he demands, it is only an interested gratitude I have to offer him.”

Thus, every thing is productive of sentiment in a susceptible mind; the whole universe presenting to Eloisa nothing but what is a subject for love and gratitude. On every side she sees and adores the benevolent hand of Providence; here children are pledges committed by it to her care; she receives its gifts in the produce of the earth;

she sees her table covered by its bounty ; she sleeps under its protection ; she awakes in peace under its care ; she is instructed by its chastisements, is made happy by its favours : all the benefits she reaps, all the blessings she enjoys are so many different subjects for adoration and praise. If the attributes of the Divinity are beyond her feeble sight, she sees in every part of the creation the common father of mankind. To honour thus the supreme benevolence is it not to serve as much as possible an infinite Being ?

Think, my lord, what pain it must give a woman of such a disposition to spend a life of retirement with a man who, while he forms a part of her existence, cannot partake of that hope which makes her existence dear ; not to be able to join him in praise and gratitude to the Deity, nor to converse with him on the blessed futurity we have to hope from his goodness ! to see him insensible, in doing good, to every thing which should make virtue agreeable to us ; and with the strangest absurdity, thinking like an infidel and acting as a Christian. Imagine her walking abroad with her husband ; the one admiring, in the beautiful verdure of spring, or golden fruits of autumn, the power and beneficence of the great Creator of all things ; the other seeing in them nothing but a fortuitous combination of atoms, united only by chance.. Imagine to yourself the situation of a married couple, having a sincere regard for each

other, who, for fear of giving offence, dare not indulge themselves in such sentiments or reflections as the objects around them inspire; but who are bound in duty, even from their reciprocal affections, to lay themselves under continual restraint. Eloisa and I hardly ever walk out together, but some striking or picturesque object puts her in mind of this disagreeable circumstance. "Alas! (said she, with great emotion, to me one day) this beautiful prospect before us, so lively, so animating in our eyes, is a dead and lifeless scene in those of the unfortunate Wolmar. In all that harmony of created beings which nature displays, in vain do they unite to speak their Maker's praise: M. Wolmar perceives only a profound and eternal silence."

You who know Eloisa, who know what delight her communicative mind takes in imparting its sentiments; think what she must suffer by such constraint, even though it were attended with no other inconvenience than that unsocial reserve which is peculiarly disagreeable between two persons so intimately connected. But Eloisa has much greater cause of uneasiness. In vain does she oppose those involuntary terrors, those dreadful ideas that rush upon her mind. They return, with redoubled force, and disturb every moment of her life. How horrid must it be for

such an affectionate wife to think the Supreme Being is the avenger of his offended attributes ! to think the happiness of him on whom her own depends must end with his life ; and to behold a reprobate of God in the father of her children ! All her sweetness of disposition can hardly preserve her from falling into despair at this horrible idea ; her religion only, which makes her feel for the infidelity of her husband, yielding her strength to support it. “ If Heaven (says she, sometimes) refuses me the conversion of this honest man, I have but one blessing to ask ; which is, that I may die before him.”

Such, my lord, is the too just cause of Eloisa's chagrin ; such is the secret affliction which preys on her mind, and is aggravated by the care she takes to conceal it. Atheism, which stalks abroad undisguised among the Papists, is obliged to hide its head in every country, where reason, giving a sanction to religion, deprives infidels of all excuse. Its principles are naturally destructive ; and though they find partizans among the rich and great, who promote them, they are held in the utmost horror by an oppressed and miserable people ; who, seeing their tyrants thus freed from the only curb to restrain their insolence, comfort themselves with the hope of another life, their only consolation in this. Mrs. Wolmar, foreseeing the ill consequences of her husband's scepticism, and being desirous to preserve her children

from the bad effects of so dangerous an example, prevailed on him to keep his principles a secret; to which she found no great trouble to persuade a man; who, though honest and sincere, is yet discreet, unaffected, without vanity, and far from wishing to deprive others of a blessing which he himself cannot enjoy. In consequence of this, he keeps his tenets to himself; he goes to church with us; conforms himself to custom; and without making a verbal confession of what he does not believe, avoids giving scandal, and pays all that respect to the established religion of the country which the state has a right to demand of its citizens.

They have been married now almost eight years, during which time Mrs. Orbe only has been in the secret; nor probably would she of herself ever have discovered it. Such care indeed is taken to save appearances, and with so little affectation, that, after having spent six weeks together in the greatest intimacy, I had not the least suspicion; and should perhaps never have known M. Wolmar's sentiments on religious matters, if Eloisa herself had not apprised me of them.

Several motives determined her to that confidence: in the first place, a too great reserve would have been incompatible with the friendship that subsists between us. Again, it would be only aggravating her uneasiness at her own

cost, to deny herself the consolation of sharing it with a friend. She was, besides, unwilling that my presence should be long an obstacle to the conversation they frequently held together on a subject she had so much at heart. In short, knowing you intended soon to join us here, she was desirous, with the consent of her husband, that you should be previously made acquainted with his sentiments; as she hopes to find, from your prudence and abilities, a supplement to our hitherto fruitless efforts, worthy of your character.

The opportunity she laid hold of to place this confidence in me made me suspect also another reason, which, however, she herself never insinuated. Her husband had just left us; we lived formerly together; our hearts had been enamoured of each other; they still remembered their former transports; had they now forgot themselves but for a moment, we had been plunged into guilt and infamy. I saw plainly she was fearful of our private conversations, and sought to prevent the consequences she feared; and I was myself too well convinced, by the remembrance of what happened at Meillerie, that they who confide least in themselves are the safest to be trusted.

Under those groundless apprehensions which her natural timidity inspired, she conceived she could take no better precaution than always to have a witness to our conversation, whose pre-

sence could not fail of being respected; and to call in, as a third person, the awful and upright judge who searches the heart, and is privy to the most secret actions of men. Thus, committing herself to the immediate protection of the Divinity, I found the Deity always between us. What criminal desire could ever assail such a safeguard? My heart grew refined by her zeal, and I partook of her virtue.

Thus, the gravest topics of discourse took up almost all our private conferences in the absence of her husband; and since his return we have resumed them frequently in his presence. He attends to our conversation, as if he was not at all concerned; and, without despising our endeavours, sometimes advises us in our method of argument. It is this which makes me despair of success; for had he less sincerity, one might attack that vicious faculty of the mind that nourishes his infidelity; but if we are to convince him by dint of reasoning, where shall we find information that has escaped his knowledge, or arguments that have eluded his sagacity? For my part, when I have undertaken to dispute with him, I have found that all mine have been before exhausted to no purpose by Eloisa; and that my reasoning fell far short of that pathetic eloquence which, dictated by the heart, flowed in persuasive accents from her tongue. I fear, my lord, we shall never make a convert of this man. He

is too frigid, not immoral ; his passions are not to be moved : sensibility, that innate proof of the truth of religion, is wanting ; and the want of this alone is enough to invalidate all others.

Notwithstanding Eloisa's care to disguise her uneasiness from him, he knows and partakes of it ; his discernment will not permit him to be imposed on. His own chagrin, therefore, on account of hers is but too apparent. Hence he has been tempted several times to affect a change of sentiments, and, for the sake of Eloisa's peace, to adopt tenets he could not in fact believe : but his soul was above the meanness of hypocrisy. This dissimulation, instead of imposing on Eloisa, would only have afforded a new cause of sorrow. That sincerity, that frankness, that union of hearts, which now comfort them under their afflictions, would then have no more subsisted between them. Was it by making himself less worthy her esteem that he could hope to calm her fears ? No ; instead, therefore, of deceiving her, he tells her plainly his thoughts ; but this he does in a manner so simple and unaffected, so little disdainful of received opinions, so unlike that ironical, contemptuous behaviour of pretended free-thinkers, that such melancholy confessions are extremely afflicting. As she cannot, however, inspire her husband with that faith and hope with which she herself is animated, she studies with the more assiduity to indulge him in all those transient

pleasures to which his happiness is confined.
 "Alas (says she, weeping)! if the poor unfortunate has his Heaven in this life, let us make it at least as agreeable to him as possible!"

• That veil of sorrow, which this difference in opinion throws over their union, gives a further proof of the irresistible ascendant of Eloisa, in the consolation with which that affliction is tempered, and which, perhaps, no other person in the world would be able to apply. All their altercations, all their disputes, on this important point, so far from giving rise to ill-nature, contempt, or anger, generally end in some affecting scene, which the more endears them to each other.

Our conversation falling yesterday upon the same subject, as it frequently does when we three are by ourselves, we were led into a dispute concerning the origin of evil, in which I endeavoured to prove, that no absolute or general evil existed in the system of nature; but that even particular and relative evils were much less in reality than in appearance; and that, on the whole, they were more than recompensed by our particular and so-

* How much more natural is this humane sentiment, than the horrid zeal of persecutors, always employed in tormenting the unbeliever, as if, to damn him in this life, they themselves were the forerunners of devils: I shall ever continue to repeat it, a persecutor of others cannot be a true believer himself.

lative good. As an example of this, I appealed to M. Wolmar himself, and, penetrated with a sense of the happiness of his situation, I described it so justly, and in such agreeable colours, that he seemed himself affected with the description. "Such (says he, interrupting me) are the delusive arguments of Eloisa: she always substitutes sentiment in the place of reason, and argues so affectingly, that I cannot help embracing her at every reply: was it not her philosophical preceptor (added he, smiling) that taught her this manner of reasoning?" Two months before, this piece of pleasantry would have cruelly disconcerted me; but my first embarrassment was now over, and I joined in the laugh: nor did Eloisa, though she blushed a little, appear any more embarrassed than myself. We continued the dispute. Wolmar, not contending about the quantity of evil, contented himself with observing that, whether little or much, evil still existed; and thence inferred the want either of power, wisdom, or goodness in the First Cause. I, on my part, strove to deduce the origin of physical evil from the properties of matter, and of moral evil from the free agency of man. I advanced, that nothing was impossible to the Deity, except the creation of substances as perfect and exempt from evil as himself. We were in the heat of our dispute when I perceived Eloisa had left us. "Can you guess whither she is gone?" (said her hus-

band seeing me look around for her.) "I suppose (said I) to give some orders in her family."—"No (replied he); she would not have left us at this time for that. Business of that kind is, I know not how, transacted without my ever seeing her interfere."—"Then she is gone to the nursery?"—"No; her children are not more at her heart than my conversion."—"Well then (said I), I know not what she is gone about; but I am well assured she is employed in some useful concern."—"Still less (said he, coldly); come, come along; you shall see if I guess right."

He then stepped softly along the room, and I followed him in the same manner: when, coming to the door of Eloisa's closet, and finding it shut, he threw it suddenly open. O! my lord! what a sight did this present us? Eloisa on her knees, her hands lifted up to Heaven, and her face bathed in tears! She rose up precipitately, wiping her eyes, hiding her face, and trying to escape us: never did I see so affecting a confusion. Her husband did not give her time to get away; but ran to her in a kind of transport: "Ah, my dear (said he, embracing her)! even the fervency of your prayers betrays the weakness of your cause: what prevents their efficacy? If your desires were heard, they would presently be granted."—"I doubt not (said she, with a devout confidence) but they will be granted; how soon or late I leave to Heaven. Could I obtain

it at the expence of my life, I should lay it down with pleasure, and think the last the best employ-
ed of all my days."

Come, my lord, leave those scenes of destruc-
tion you are now engaged in, and act a nobler
part. Can a philosopher prefer the honour of de-
stroying mankind to the virtue of endeavouring
to save them*?

LETTER CXLII.

TO LORD B——.

WHAT! my lord, after being absent a whole
campaign, must you take a journey to Paris?
Have you then entirely forgot Clarens, and its
inhabitants? Are we less dear to you than my
Lord H——! or, are you more necessary to that
friend than to those who expect you here? You
oblige us to oppose our wishes to yours, and
make me in particular lament that I have not
interest enough at the court of France to prevent
your obtaining the passports you wait for. But,
no matter; go, visit your worthy countryman.
In spite of you both, we will be revenged of you
for the preference given him; for, whatever plea-
sure you may enjoy in his company, I know that,

* There is here a long letter wanting, from Lord B——
to Eloisa. It is mentioned in the sequel: but, for particu-
lar reasons, I was obliged to suppress it.

when you come to be with us, you will regret the time you staid away.

On receiving your letter, I at first suspected you were charged with some secret commission. If peace were in view, where could be found a more worthy mediator!—But when do kings put their confidence in men of worth? Dare they listen to truth? Do they know how to respect true merit? No, my dear Lord B——, you are not made for a minister of state; and I think too well of you to imagine, if you had not been born a peer, you would ever have risen to that dignity.—Come, come, my friend, you will be better at Clarens than at court. What an agreeable winter shall we pass together, if the hope of seeing you here does not deceive me! Our happiness is every day preparing, by the arrival of one or other of those privileged minds, who are so dear to each other, so worthy of each other's esteem, and who seem only to wait for you, to be able to live without all the rest of the world. On hearing what a lucky accident brought hither the Baron's adversary, you foresaw the consequences of that rencounter; it has really fallen out as you foretold. That old litigant, though almost as obstinate and inflexible as his opponent, could not resist the ascendant we got over him. After seeing and conversing with Eloisa, he began to be ashamed of contending with her father; and on leaving her, set out for

Bern, in so favourable a disposition, that we hear an accommodation is far advanced, and from the Baron's last letter; expect his return home in a few days. This you will already have been told by M. Wolmar: but probably you do not yet know that Mrs. Orbe, having settled her affairs, arrived here on Thursday last, and resides entirely at the house of her friend. As I knew beforehand the day of her arrival, I set out to meet her, unknown to Mrs. Wolmar, whom she had a mind to surprise: we met on this side Lœtri, and returned together.

I think I never saw her so sprightly and agreeable; but unequal, absent, giving little attention to any thing, seldom replying; talking by fits and starts; in a word, given up entirely to that restlessness which is natural to us, when just on the point of obtaining what we have long ardently desired. One would have thought every minute that she was afraid of being obliged to return. Her journey, though so long deferred, was undertaken so precipitately, that it almost turned the heads of both mistress and domestics. A whimsical disorder appeared throughout the whole of her little baggage. If her woman imagined, as she did every now and then, that she had left something behind, Clara as constantly assured her that she had put it into the seat of the coach; where, upon further enquiry, it was not to be found.

As she was unwilling Eloisa should hear the rattling of her coach, she got out in the avenue, before we came to the gate ; and scudding across the court-yard like a sylph, ran up stairs with so much precipitation that she was obliged to stop and take breath on the first landing-place, before she could get up the next flight. M. Wolmar came out to meet her, but she was in too much hurry to speak to him. On opening the door of Eloisa's apartment, I saw her sitting near the window, with the little Harriet on her knee. Clara had prepared for her a fine compliment in her way ; a compound of affection and pleasantry ; but, on setting her foot over the threshold, compliment and pleasantry were all forgotten ; she flew forward to embrace her friend with a transport impossible to be described, crying out, Ah ! my dear, dear cousin ! Harriet seeing her mother, fled to meet her, and crying out *Mamma, Mamma*, ran with so much force against her, that the poor child fell backward on the floor. The effect of the sudden appearance of Clara, the fall of Harriet, the joy, the apprehensions, that seized upon Eloisa at that instant, made her give a violent shriek, and faint away. Clara was going to lift up the child, when she saw her friend turn pale, which made her hesitate whom to assist ; till, seeing me take up Harriet, she flew to the relief of Eloisa ; but, in endeavouring to recover her,

sunk down likewise in a swoon by the side of her friend.

The child, seeing them both without motion, made such loud lamentations as soon brought the little French woman into the room; the one clung about her mother, the other ran to her mistress. For my part, I was so struck, that I stalked about the room, without knowing what I did, venting broken exclamations, and making involuntary motions to no purpose. Wolmar himself, the unsusceptible Wolmar, seemed affected. But where is the heart of iron whom such a scene of sensibility would not affect? Where is the unfortunate mortal from whom such a scene of tenderness would not have extorted tears? Instead of running to Eloisa, this fortunate husband threw himself on a settee, to enjoy the delightful scene. "Be not afraid (says he, seeing our uneasiness): in these accidents nature only is exhausted for a moment, to recover itself with new vigour; they are never dangerous. Let me prevail on you not to interrupt the pleasure I take in this transporting sight, but partake it with me. How ravishingly delightful must it be to you? I never tasted any thing like it, and am yet the most unhappy of all here."

You may judge, my lord, by the first moment of their meeting, the consequence of the re-union of these charming friends. It has excited throughout the whole house a sound of gladness,

a tumultuous joy, that has not yet subsided. Eloisa was in such an agitation as I never saw her in before; it was impossible for her to think of any thing all that day, but to gaze on her new visitor, and load her with fresh caresses. Nobody even thought of the saloon of Apollo; there was no occasion for thinking of it when every place gave equal pleasure. We were hardly, even the next day, composed enough to think of making an entertainment on the occasion. Had it not been for Wolmar, every thing would have gone wrong. In the mean time, every one was dressed in the best manner. No other care was admitted than what tended to amusement. The entertainment was not grand, but extremely joyous; throughout the whole there reigned a pleasing confusion and disorder, which were its greatest embellishment.

The morning was spent in putting Mrs. Orbe in possession of her employment of intendant or housekeeper, and she betrayed the same eagerness to enter into her office as a child does after a new play-thing, at which we were highly diverted. In entering the saloon at dinner, both cousins were agreeably surprised to see on every side their names in cypher, artificially formed with flowers. Eloisa guessed in an instant to whom she was obliged for that piece of ingenuity; and embraced me in a transport of joy. Clara, contra-

ry to former custom, hesitated to follow her example, till Wolmar reprimanding her: she blushed and embraced me. Her sweet confusion, which I observed but too plainly, had an effect on me which I cannot describe; but I could not feel myself in her arms without emotion.

After dinner, a fine collation was set out in the Gynæceum, or woman's apartment; where, for once, M. Wolmar and I were admitted, and were entertained agreeably. In the evening all the house, now increased by three persons, assembled to dance. Clara seemed ornamented by the hands of the Graces, never having appeared to so much advantage as on that day. She danced, she chatted, she laughed, she gave orders, she was capable of every thing. Having protested she would tire me out, she danced down five or six country dances in a breath; and then reproached me for footing it with the gravity of a philosopher. I, on the other hand, told her she danced like a fairy; that she was full as mischievous, and that she would not let me rest night nor day.—“You shall see to the contrary (says she) here's that will set you to sleep presently;” with that she started up, and led down another dance.

She was really indefatigable; but it was otherwise with Eloisa: she could hardly support herself; her knees trembled as she danced; she was too much affected to be cheerful. One might observe a tear of joy every now and then

trickle from her eyes ; she regarded her cousin with a kind of delicious transport ; took a pleasure in conceiving herself the guest for whom the entertainment was made, and looked fondly upon Clara as the mistress of the house who entertained her.

After supper, I played off the fire-works I had brought from China, which had a pretty effect. We sat up great part of the night. At length it became time to break up : Mrs. Orbe was tired, or had danced enough to be so ; and Eloisa was desirous she should not sit up too late.

After this we became insensibly tranquil, and good order took place. Clara, giddy and inconsiderate as she seems, knows how to check her sallies, and put on an air of authority, when she pleases. She has, besides, great good sense, an exquisite discernment, the penetration of Wolmar, and the goodness of Eloisa ; and though extremely liberal, has a good deal of discretion in her generosity ; for, though left so young a widow, and charged with the care of a daughter, the fortunes of both increase in her hands ; so that there is no reason to apprehend the house will, under her direction, be less prudently governed than before. In the mean time, Eloisa has the satisfaction of devoting herself entirely to an occupation more agreeable to her taste ; that is, the education of her children : and I doubt

not but Harriet will profit greatly by one of her mothers having relieved the other. I say her mothers, because, by the manner in which they both behave to her, it is difficult to distinguish which is really so; so that some strangers who arrived here to-day, are still, or appear to be, in doubt about it. In fact, they both call her *Harriet*, or *my child*, indifferently. She calls the one her *mamma*, and the other her *little mamma*: she has the same love for both, and pays them equal obedience. If the ladies are asked whose child it is, each answers it is hers: if Harriet be questioned, she says that she has two mothers; so that it is no wonder people are puzzled. The most discerning, however, think her the child of Eloisa; Harriet, whose father was of a fair complexion, being fair like her, and sometimes resembling her in features. A greater maternal tenderness appears also in the soft regards of Eloisa than in the sprightlier looks of Clara. The child puts on also a more respectful air, and is more reserved in her behaviour before the former. She places herself involuntarily oftener on the side of Eloisa, because she most frequently talks to her. It must be confessed all appearances are in favour of our *little mamma*; and I perceive the deception is so agreeable to the two cousins, that it may be sometimes perhaps intended.

In a fortnight, my lord, nothing will be wanting here but your presence; and when you are

arrived, I shall have a very bad opinion of that man who shall be tempted to ransack the world for a virtue, or a pleasure, which may not be found in this house.

L E T T E R CXLIII.

TO LORD B——.

FOR these three days past I have attempted every evening successively to write to you; but found myself, through the fatigue of the day, too sleepy to effect my purpose at night, and in the morning I am again called upon early to my employment. A pleasing tranquillity, more intoxicating than wine, takes possession of my senses, and I cannot, without regret, bear a moment's avocation from the new and agreeable amusements I find here.

I cannot, indeed, conceive that any place would be disagreeable to me in such company; but do you know why Clarens in itself is agreeable? It is, that here I find myself actually in the country, which I could hardly ever say before. The inhabitants of cities know not how to enjoy the country; they know not what it is to be there; and, even when they are there, know not what to do with themselves. They are ignorant of all rustic business and amuse-

ments ; they despise them ; they seem at home as if they were in a foreign country, and I am not at all surpris'd that they are displeas'd with it. Among the country people we should live as they do, or not associate with them at all.

The Parisians, who imagine they go into the country, mistake the thing ; they carry Paris along with them. They are attended with their fingers, their wits, their authors, and their parasites. Cards, music, and plays, engross all their attention* ; their tables are spread in the same manner as at Paris ; they sit down to their meals at the same hours ; are served with the same dishes, and in the same pomp : in a word, they do just the same things in the country as they did in town, where, for that reason, it had been better they had stay'd ; for, however opulent they are, or careful to omit nothing they are accus'tom'd to, they always find something wanting, and perceive the impossibility of carrying Paris altogether along with them. Thus, that variety they are so fond of eludes their search ; they are acquainted only with one manner of living, and are therefore a continual burden to themselves.

* Hunting, indeed, might be added. But this exercise is now made so com'medious, that there is not half the fatigue or pleasure in it there us'd to be. But I shall not here treat of this subject, which would furnish too much matter to be insert'd in a note : I may take occasion, perhaps, to speak of it elsewhere.

To me every rural employment affords something agreeable; nor is there any so painful and laborious as to excite our compassion for the labourer. As the object of both public and private utility, husbandry is peculiarly interesting; and, as it was the first employment of man in his state of innocence, it fills the mind with the most pleasing sensations, and affects us with the agreeable ideas of the golden age. The imagination cannot help being warmed by the prospects of seed-time and harvest: if we look around us, and see the fields covered with hay-makers, and with flocks of sheep, scattered at a distance, one is sensibly affected with a pleasure arising one knows not how. The voice of nature thus sometimes softens our savage hearts, and though its dictates are too often fruitless, it is so agreeable that we never hear it without pleasure.

I must confess, that the misery which appears on the face of some countries, where the taxes devour the produce of the earth, the eager avarice of a greedy collector, the inflexible rigour of an inhuman master, take away much of the beauty of the prospect. To see the poor jaded cattle ready to expire under the whip; to see the unhappy peasants themselves emaciated with fasting, clothed in rags, groaning with fatigue, and hardly secured from the inclemencies of the weather by their wretched huts: these are deplorable

fights, and it makes one almost blush to be a man, when one thinks how the very vitals of such poor objects are drained, to satisfy their cruel masters. But what pleasure is it, on the other hand, to see the prudent and humane proprietors, in milder governments, make the cultivation of their lands the instrument of their benevolence, their recreation, their pleasures! to see them with open hands distribute the bounties of Providence! to see their servants, their cattle, and every creature about them, fatten on the abundance that flows from their barns, their cellars, and granaries! to see them surrounded with peace and plenty, and make, of the employment that enriches them, a continual entertainment! How is it possible for one to be inattentive to the agreeable illusions which such objects present? We forget the age we live in, and the vices of our contemporaries, and are transported in imagination to the time of the patriarchs; we are desirous to set one's own hands to work; to join in the rustic employment, and partake of the happiness annexed to it. Oh! how delightful were the days of love and innocence, when the women were affectionate and modest, the men simple and content! Such were the days when a lover did not regret fourteen years of servitude to obtain his mistress. Fair daughter of Laban! keeper of thy father's flocks, how amiable must thou have been! how irresistible thy charms!

No, never doth beauty exert its power so much as when in the midst of rural scenes and rustic simplicity. Here is the real seat of its empire ; here she sits on her throne, surrounded by the Graces ; adorned by whose hands, she captivates all beholders. Excuse this rhapsody, my lord ; I return now to my subject.

For this month past the autumnal heats have been preparing a favourable vintage, which the frost has already induced us to begin* ; the parched leaves falling off the vines, and exposing to view the clustered grapes, whose juicy ripeness invites the hands of the gatherers. Vines loaded with this salutary fruit, which Heaven bestows on the unfortunate as a cure for all their woes : the sound of the casks, tubs, and tons, which they are hooping on every side ; the songs of the gatherers, with which the vintage re-echoes ; and the continual trotting backwards and forwards of those who carry the grapes to the press ; the harsh sound of the rustic instruments that animate the people to work ; the agreeable and affecting—
—picture of a general good humour, which seems to be extended at that time over the face of the whole earth ; add to these the fog, which the sun exhales in a morning, and draws up like the cur-

* The vintage is very late in this country ; because the principle crop is of white wines ; to which the frost is of service.

tain of a theatre, to display so delightful a scene ; all conspire to give it the air of an entertainment ; and that an entertainment which is the more pleasing on reflection that it is the only one in which mankind have art enough to join utility with delight.

M. Wolmar, who has one of the best vineyards in the country, has made all the necessary preparations for his vintage. His backs, his wine-presses, his cellar, his casks, are all ready for that delicious liquor for which they are designed. Mrs. Wolmar herself takes charge of the crop ; the choice of the labourers, and the order and distribution of the several parts of the work falling to her share. Mrs. Orbe takes care of all entertainments, and of the payment of the day-labourers, agreeably to the police established here, the laws of which are never infringed or broken. As to my part, I am set to inspect the press, and enforce the directions of Eloisa, who cannot bear the steam of the backs ; and Clara did not fail to recommend me to this employ, as it is so well adapted, she says, to a toper. Thus, every one having an allotted task, we are all up early in the morning, and are assembled to go to the vineyard. Mrs. Orbe, who never thinks herself sufficiently employed, undertakes further to observe and rate those who are idle ; in doing which, I can safely say, with respect to me at least, that she acquits herself with a malicious assiduity. As

to the old Baron, while we are all employed, he walks out with his gun, and comes every now and then, to take me from my work, to go with him a thrush-shooting; and I am taxed by my companions with being secretly engaged to him. So that by degrees I lose my old name of philosopher, and get that of an idler; appellations which in reality are not very different. You see, by what I have told you of the Baron, that we are quite reconciled, and that Wolmar has reason to be content with his second experiment.* Shall I hate the father of my friend! No; were I his son, I could not respect him more than I do. In fact, I know not any man more sincere, more

* This will be better understood by the following extract of a letter from Eloisa, not inserted in this collection: "This (says M. Wolmar, taking me aside) is the second proof I intended to put him to, if he had not paid great respect to your father, I should have mistrusted him."—"But (said I) how shall we reconcile that respect to the antipathy that subsists between them?"—"It subsists no longer (replied he.) Your father's prejudices have done St. Preux all the harm they could; he has no further reason to fear them; he is not angry at your father, but pities him. The Baron, on his side, is no longer jealous of St. Preux; he has a good heart; is sensible he has injured him, and is sorry for it. I see they will do very well together, and will for the future, see each other with pleasure. From this moment, therefore, I shall put an entire confidence in him."

open, more generous, or more honourable in every respect than this old gentleman. But the extravagance of his notions and prejudices is odd enough. Since he is certain I cannot be united to his family, he is extremely civil; and, provided I be not his son-in-law, he will readily give up every thing, and allow me a superiority to himself. The only thing I cannot forgive him, is, that when we are alone he will sometimes rally the pretended philosopher on his former lectures. His pleasantry on this head hurts me, and I am always vexed at it; but he turns my resentment into ridicule, and says, "Come along, let us go bring down a thrush or two; we have carried this argument far enough." And then he calls out, as we go out of doors; "Here, Clara, Clara! provide a good supper for your master; I am going to get him an appetite." Notwithstanding his age, also, I can assure you he brushes among the vines with his gun, with as much activity as myself, and is incomparably a better marksman. I have some satisfaction, however, in that he dares not drop a word before his daughter, the little scholar prescribing no less to her father than to her preceptor. But to return to our vintage.

It is now a week since we have been employed in this agreeable occupation, yet we have hardly done half our work. Besides the wines intended for sale and for common use, which are

only simply, though carefully made, our benevolent fairy made others of a more exquisite flavour for us drinkers ; I myself assisting in the magical operations.

We make wines of all countries from the grapes of one vineyard : to make one sort, she orders the stalks of the bunches to be twisted when the grape is ripe, and lets them dry by the heat of the sun upon the stock ; for another, she has the grapes picked and stoned before they are put into the press ; again, for a third sort, she has the red grapes gathered before sun-rising, and carefully conveyed to the press, fresh with their bloom, and covered with the morning dew, to make white wine. She makes a sweet wine,* by putting into the casks *must*, reduced to a syrup by evaporation ; a dry wine, by checking its fermentation ; a bitter cordial, by steeping worm-wood* ; and a muscadel wine, with the help of simples. All these different wines have their peculiar methods of preparation ; every one of which is simple and wholesome. And thus an industrious economy makes up for a diversity of soils, and unites twenty climates in one. You cannot conceive with what assiduity, with what alacrity, all our business is done. We sing and laugh all day long,

* In Switzerland they drink a great deal of bitter wine ; and in general, as the herbs of the Alps have more virtue than the plants of other countries, they make great use of infusions.

without the least interruption to our work. We live altogether in the greatest familiarity; are all treated on a footing, and yet no one forgets himself. The ladies put on none of their fine airs, the country women are modest, the men droll, but never rude. Those are the most caressed who sing the best songs, tell the best stories, or hit off the best joke. Our good understanding even gives rise to pleasing bickerings between us, and our mutual raillery is exerted only to show how far we can bear, with good temper, each other's severity. There is no returning home to play the *gentlefolks*; we stay all the day long in the vineyard; Eloisa having caused a lodge to be built there, whither we retreat to warm ourselves when cold, or to shelter us when it rains. We dine with the peasants, and at their hour, as well as work with them. We eat their soup, a little coarse indeed, but very good, and seasoned with excellent herbs. We laugh not at their downright behaviour and rustic compliments; but, in order to free them from restraint, give in to their own ways, without affectation. This complaisance on our side also is not lost upon them; they are sensible of it; and seeing that we are so ready to go out of our way for them, they are more willing to go on in their own for us. At dinner the children are brought from the house, and pass the rest of the day in the vineyard. How rejoiced are the peasants to see them! then,

taking them up in their sturdy arms, they bless them, and wish that Heaven may prolong their days, to resemble their parents, and make them in like manner a blessing to their country. When I think that the most of these men have borne arms, and understand the use of the sword and musket as well as the management of the hoe and pruning knife, in seeing Eloisa so loved and respected by them, and herself and children received with such affecting acclamations, I cannot help calling to mind the virtuous and illustrious Agrippina showing her son to the troops of Germanicus. Incomparable Eloisa! who exercises in the simplicity of private life the despotic power of wisdom and beneficence; your person a dear and sacred trust deposited in the hands of your countrymen, every one of whom would defend and protect you at the hazard of his own life; it is your's to live more securely, most honourably, in the midst of a whole people who love you, than monarchs surrounded with guards.

In the evening, we all return home cheerfully together; the work people being lodged and boarded with us all the time of the vintage; and even on Sundays, after the evening service, we assemble and dance together till supper-time. On the other days of the week, also, we remain altogether, after we are returned home, except the Baron, who, eating no suppers, goes to bed early,

and Eloisa, who, with her children, stays with him till his bed-time. Thus, from the time we take upon ourselves the business of the vintage, till we quit it, we never once mix the city and country life together. These Saturnalia are much more agreeable and discreet than those of the Romans. The contrast they effected was too preposterous to improve either the master or the slave ; but the peaceful equality which prevails here re-establishes the order of nature, is productive of instruction to some, of consolation to others, and of a friendly connexion between all*. Our assembly-room is an old hall, with a great chimney, and a good fire in it. On the mattle-piece are lighted up three lamps, made by M. Wolmar's orders of tin, just to catch the

* If hence arises a kind of equality not less agreeable to those who descend than to those who are elevated, does it not follow, that all conditions of life are in themselves almost indifferent, since people are not always confined to them? Beggars are unhappy, because they are always beggars; kings are miserable, because they are always kings. People in a middling condition are the happiest, because they can easier vary their circumstances to enjoy the pleasures of those above or those below them. They are also more intelligent, because they have an opportunity of knowing more of the prejudices of mankind, and of comparing them with each other. This seems to me the principal reason why, generally speaking, people of a middling station in life are the most happy, and are persons of the best sense.

smoke, and reflect the light. To prevent giving rise to envy, every thing is carefully avoided that might in the eyes of these poor people appear more costly than what they meet with at home ; no other mark of opulence being displayed than the choice of the best of common things, and a little more profusion in their distribution. Supper is served upon two long tables ; where the pomp and luxury of entertainments is amply supplied by good humour and plenty. Every one sits down to table, master, labourers, and servants ; every one without distinction gets up to help himself, without exception or preference ; the whole repast ending in gratitude and festivity. All drink at their discretion, subject to no other rules than those of decency and sobriety. The presence of superiors, whom they so truly respect, keeps the work people within bounds ; yet lays no restraint on their ease and cheerfulness. And should any one happen to forget himself, and give offence, the company is not disturbed by reprimands, the offender being dismissed the next day, without farther notice.

Thus do I take advantage of the pleasures of the country and the season. I resume the freedom of living after the manner of the country, and to drink pure wine pretty often ; but I drink none that is not poured out by the hands of one or other of the two cousins ; who take upon them to measure my thirst by the strength of my head,

and to manage my reason as they think proper ; nor does any one know better how to manage it, or has like them the art to give or take it away from me at pleasure. When the fatigue of the day, or the length and festivity of the repast, add to the strength of the liquor, I indulge myself without restraint in the sallies it inspires. They are no longer such as I need suppress, even in the presence of the sagacious Wolmar. I am no longer afraid his penetrating eye should see into the bottom of my heart ; and, when a tender idea arises in my memory, one look from Clara dissipates it ; one look of Eloisa makes me blush for my weakness.

After supper, we sit up an hour or two to strip hemp ; every one singing a song in turn. Sometimes the women sing all together, or one sings alone, and the rest join in chorus to the burden of the song. Most of their songs are old tales, set to no very agreeable tunes. There is notwithstanding, something antique and affecting, which, on the whole, is very pleasing. The words are generally very simple, unaffected, and often very sorrowful : they are, nevertheless, entertaining. Clara cannot forbear smiling, Eloisa blushing, and myself from giving a sigh, when the same turns and expressions are repeated in these songs which have heretofore been made use of between us. On these occasions, the remembrance of times past rushes upon my mind : I am

seized with a trembling, an insupportable burden oppresses my heart, and leaves so deep an impression of sorrow, that I can hardly shake it off. I find, nevertheless, in these evenings, a sort of pleasure which I cannot describe, and which is nevertheless very great.

The union of people of different conditions, the simplicity of their occupation, the idea of ease, concord, and tranquillity, the peaceful sensation it awakes in the soul; these altogether have something affecting that disposes every one to make choice of the most interesting songs. The concert of female voices is also not without its charms. For my part, I am convinced, that of all kinds of harmony there is none so agreeable as singing in unison; and that we only require a variety of concords, because our taste is depraved. Does not harmony, in fact, exist in every single note? what then can we add to it, without changing the proportions which nature has established in the relation of harmonious sounds.

Nature has done every thing in the best manner; but we would do better, and so spoil all.

There is as great an emulation among us about the work of the evening, as about that of the day; and a piece of roguery I was guilty of yesterday, brought me into a little disgrace. As I am not the most expert at hemp-peeling, and am sometimes absent in thought, I began to be tired with always being pointed at for doing the least

work. I shovelled the stalks with my feet; therefore, from my next neighbours, to enlarge my own heap; but that inexorable Mrs. Orbe perceiving it, made a sign to Eloisa, who, detecting me in the fact, reprimanded me severely.

“Come, come (says she, aloud), I will have no injustice done here, though in jest; it is thus people accustom themselves to cheating, and prove rogues in good earnest, and then, what is worse, make a jest of it.”

In this manner we pass our evenings. When it is near bed-time, Mrs. Wolmar stands up, and says, “Come, now let us to our fire-works.” On which every one takes up his bundle of hemp-stalks, the honourable proofs of his labour, which are carried in triumph into the middle of the court-yard, and there laid as trophies in a heap, and set on fire. Every one, however, has not indiscriminately this honour; but those to whom Eloisa adjudges it, by giving the torch to him or her who has done most work that evening; and when this happens to be herself, she does it with her own hands, without more to do. This ceremony is accompanied with acclamations and clapping of hands. The stalks soon burn up in a blaze, which ascends to the clouds; a real bon-fire, about which we laugh and sing, till it is out. After this, the whole company are served with liquor, and every one drinks to the health of the conqueror, and goes to bed, content with a day

passed in labour, cheerfulness, and innocence, which he would willingly begin again the next day, the next after that, and every day to the last of his life.

LETTER CXLIV.

TO M. WOLMAR.

ENJOY, my dear Wolmar, the fruits of your labour. Receive the acknowledgements of a heart which you have taken so much pains to render worthy of being offered to your acceptance. Never did any man undertake so arduous a task; never did any one attempt what you have executed; nor did ever a susceptible and grateful mind feel more than that with which you have inspired me. Mine had lost its force, its vigour, its very being; but you have restored them all: I was dead to virtue, to happiness, and owe to you that moral life, to which you have raised me. O my benefactor! my father! in giving myself up entirely to you, I can only offer, as to the Deity, the gifts I have received at your hands.

Must I confess to you my weakness and my fears? Hitherto I have always distrusted myself. It is not a week ago that I blushed for the weakness of my heart, and thought all our pains had been lost. That cruel and discouraging moment,

however, thanks to Heaven and you, is past, never to return. I do not think myself cured, only because you tell me so, but because I feel it: I stand no longer in need of your answering for me, who have put me in a state to answer for myself. It was necessary for me to be absent from you and Eloisa, to know what I should be without your support. It is at a distance from her abode that I learn not to be afraid to approach her.

As I write the particulars of our journey to Mrs. Orbe, I shall not repeat them here: I am not unwilling you should know my foibles; but I have not the courage to tell you of them. It is, my dear Wolmar, my last fault. I feel myself so far already from being liable to commit the like again, that I cannot think of it without disdain; and yet it is so little a while since, that I cannot acknowledge it without shame. You, who can so readily forgive my errors, will doubtless forgive the shame which attends my repentance.

Nothing is now wanting to complete my happiness. My Lord B—— has told me all. Shall I then, my dear friend, be devoted entirely to you? Shall I educate your children? Shall the eldest of the three be preceptor to the rest? With what ardour have I not desired it? The hope of being thought worthy of such employment has

redoubled my assiduity to second your paternal care and instructions.

How often have I not expressed my earnestness, in this particular, to Eloisa! with what pleasure have I not interpreted the discourse of both of you in my favour! But although she was convinced of my zeal for your service, and seemed to approve of its object, she never entered so explicitly into my designs as to encourage me to speak more openly. I was sensible I ought rather to merit that honour than to ask for it. I expected of you and her that proof of your confidence and esteem. I have not been deceived in my expectation, nor shall you, my dear friends, believe me, be deceived in yours.

You know that, in the course of our conversation on the education of your children, I have thrown together upon paper some of those sentiments which such conversation furnished me with, and which you approved. Since my departure, some new reflections have suggested themselves on the same subject: I have reduced the whole into a kind of system, which, when I have properly digested, I shall communicate to you for your examination. I do not think, however, I shall be able to make it fit for your inspection till after our arrival at Rome. My system is a supplement to that of Eloisa; or rather, it is nothing more than a connexion and illustration of hers; for it consists only in rules to pre-

vent the natural disposition from being spoiled, in subjecting it to the laws and customs of society.

I have recovered my reason by your care : my heart is again sound, and at liberty : I see myself beloved by all whose love I could wish to possess : futurity presents me with an agreeable prospect. With all this, my situation should surely be delightful ; but it is decreed my soul shall never enjoy tranquillity. As the end of our journey approaches, I see the crisis of the fate of my illustrious friend : it is I, if I may so say, who ought to decide it. Cannot I at least do that once for him which he has so often done for me ? Cannot I nobly discharge the greatest and most important duty of my life ? My dear Wolmar, I retain all your lessons in my heart ; but, to make them useful, why do not I possess your sagacity ? Ah ! could I but one day see Lord B—— happy ! Could I, agreeably to your projects, see us but all assembled together never to part again ! Could I entertain a wish for any thing on earth besides ! Yes, one, the accomplishment of which depends not on you, nor me, nor on any other person in the world ; but on him who has a reward in store for the virtues of Eloïsa, and keeps a secret register of your good actions.

LETTER CXLV.

TO MRS. ORBE.

WHERE are you, my charming cousin? Oh! where is the amiable confident of that feeble heart, which is, on so many accounts, yours; and which you have so often comforted in despair? Come, and let me lay open to you the confession of its last error. Is it not always your province to purify it by confession and pardon? Is there a fault which it can reproach itself with after it hath confessed it to you? No, it is no longer the same; and its regeneration is owing to you: you have given me a new heart, which now offers you its first services: but I shall not think myself quite free from that which I quit, till I have deposited it in your hands.

The moment of my life in which I had most reason to be contented with myself was that in which I left you. Recovered of my errors, I looked upon that instant as the tardy æra of my return to my duty. I began it, therefore, by paying off part of that immense debt I owed to friendship, in leaving so delightful an abode to follow a benefactor, a philosopher, who, pretending to stand in need of my services, put the success of his to the proof. The more disagreeable my departure, the more I piqued myself on making so great a sacrifice. After having spent half

my time in nourishing an unhappy passion, I consecrated the other half to justify it, and to render, by my virtues, a more worthy homage to her who so long received that of my heart. I proudly contemplated the first of my days in which I had neither given occasion for my own blunders, for your's, for her's, nor for those of any one who was dear to me. My Lord B——, being apprehensive of a sorrowful parting, was for our setting out early, without taking a formal leave; but though hardly any body was stirring in the house, we could not elude your friendly vigilance. Your door half open, and your woman on the watch; your coming out to meet us, and our going in and finding a table set out, and tea made ready, all these circumstances brought to my mind those of former times; and, comparing my present departure with that which came to my remembrance, I found myself so very differently disposed to what I was on the former occasion, that I rejoiced to think Lord B—— was a witness of that difference, and hoped to make him forget at Milan the shameful scene of Besançon. I never found myself so resolute before; I prided myself in displaying my temper before you; behaving with more fortitude than you have ever seen in me; and gloried, in parting, to think I had appeared before you such as I was going ever afterwards to be. This idea added to my courage; I supported my spirits by your esteem;

and perhaps should have left you without weeping, if a tear, trickling down your cheek, had not drawn a sympathetic drop from my eyes.

I left you with a heart fully sensible of its obligations, and particularly penetrated with such as your friendship has laid me under; resolved to employ the rest of my life in deserving them. My Lord B——, taking me to task for my past follies, laid before me no very agreeable picture; and I knew by the just severity with which he censured my foibles, that he was little afraid of imitating them. He pretended, nevertheless, to be apprehensive of it; and spoke to me with some uneasiness of his journey to Rome, and the unworthy attachments, which, in spite of himself, led him thither: but I saw plainly that he exaggerated his own dangers, to engage my attention the more to him, and draw it off from those to which I was myself exposed. Just as we got into Villeneuve, one of our servants, who was but badly mounted, was thrown off his horse, and got a small contusion on his head: on which his master had him bled, and determined to stay there that night. We accordingly dined early, and afterwards took horses, and went to Bex, to see the salt manufactory; where, at my lord's desire, who had some particular reason for requesting it, I took a sketch of the building and works, so that we did not return to Villeneuve till night. After supper we chat-

ted a good while over our punch, and went to bed pretty late. It was in this conversation he informed me of the charge intended to be committed to my care, and what measures had been taken to bring it about. You may judge of the effect this piece of information had upon me ; a conversation of this nature did not incline me to sleep. It was at length, however, time to retire.

As I entered the chamber appointed for me, I immediately recollected it to be the same in which I had formerly slept, on my journey to Sion. The view of it made an impression on me, which would be very difficult for me to describe. I was struck with such lively ideas of what I then was, that I imagined myself again in the same situation, though ten years of my life had passed away in the interval, and all my troubles had been forgotten. But, alas ! that reflection was but of a short duration, and the next moment oppressed me with the weight of my former afflictions. How mortifying were the recollections that succeeded to my first reverie ! what dreadful comparisons suggested themselves to my mind ! Ye pleasures of early youth ; ye exquisite delights of a first passion ; oh ! why, said I, doth your remembrance wound a heart already too much oppressed with griefs ? Thrice happy were those days ! days now no more, in which I loved and was beloved again ; in which I gave myself up in peaceful innocence to the trans-

ports of a mutual passion ; in which I drank its intoxicating draughts, and all my faculties were lost in the rapture, the ecstasy, the delirium of love. On the rocks of Meillerie, in the midst of frost and snow, with the frightful precipices before my eyes, was there a being in the creation so happy as I ? and yet I then wept ! I then thought myself unfortunate ! sorrow even then ventured to approach my heart ! what, therefore, should I be now, when I have possessed all that my soul held dear, and lost it for ever ? I deserve my misfortune, for having been so little sensible of my happiness !——did I weep then ?——didst thou weep ? unfortunate wretch ! thou shalt weep no more——thou hast no right to weep——Why is she not dead ? said I, in a transport of rage ; yes, I should then be less unhappy : I could then indulge myself in my griefs ; I should embrace her cold tomb with pleasure : my affliction should be worthy of her : I might then say, She hears my cries, she sees my tears, she is moved by my groans, she approves and accepts of my homage.——I should then, at least, have cherished the hope of being united to her again.——But she lives, and is happy in the possession of another.—She lives, and her life is my death ; her happiness is my torment ; and Heaven, having taken her from me, deprives me even of the mournful pleasure of regretting her loss——she lives, but not

for me: she lives for my despair, who am an hundred times farther from her than if she were no more.

I went to bed under these tormenting reflections; they accompanied me in my sleep, and disturbed it with terrible apprehension. The most poignant afflictions, sorrow, and death composed my dreams; and all the evils I ever felt represented themselves to my imagination in a thousand new forms, to torment me over again. One vision in particular, and that the most cruel of all, still pursued me; and though the confused apparitions of various phantoms several times appeared and vanished, they all ended in the following:

I thought I saw the departed mother of your friend on her death bed, and her daughter on her knees before her, bathed in tears, kissing her hands, and receiving her last breath. This scene, which you once described to me, and which will never be effaced from my memory, was represented in striking colours before me. "O my dear mother (said Eloisa, in accents that chilled my very soul) she who is indebted to you for her life deprives you of your's! Alas! take back what you gave me, for without you it will be only a life of sorrow."—"My child (answered her languishing mother) God is just, and his will must be obeyed—you will be a mother in your turn, and"—she could say no more.—On this

I thought I went forward, to look upon her; she was vanished, and Eloisa lay in her place, with her plainly, and perfectly knew her, though her face was covered with a veil. I gave a shriek, I ran to take off the veil; but, methought, after many attempts to lay hold of it, I could not reach it, but tormented myself with vain endeavours to grasp what, though it covered her face, seemed to me impalpable. Upon which, methought, she addressed me in a faint voice, and said, "Friend, be composed, the awful veil that spread over me is too sacred to be removed." These words I struggled, made a new effort, I awoke; when I found myself in my bed, ruffled with fright and fatigue, my face covered with big drops of sweat, and drowned in tears.

My fears being a little dissipated, I went to sleep again; again the same dream put me into the same agitations: I awoke again, and went to sleep the third time, when the same mournful vision still presented itself, the same appearance of death, and always the same impenetrable veil, hiding my grasp, and hiding from me the dying effect which it covered.

On waking from this last dream, my terror was so great, that I could not overcome it, though I tried to awake. I threw myself out of bed, without at all knowing what I did, and wandered up and

down my chamber, like a child in the dark, imagining myself beset with phantoms, and still fancying in my ears the sound of that voice, whose plaintive notes I never heard without emotion. The dawn of day beginning to cast some light upon the objects in my chamber, served only to transform them, agreeably to my troubled imagination. My fright increased, and at length entirely deprived me of reason. Having with some difficulty found the door, I ran out of my room, bolted into that of Lord B——, and, drawing open his curtains, threw myself down upon his bed, almost breathless, crying out, “She is gone —she is gone —I shall never see her more.”—His lordship started out of his sleep, and flew to his sword, imagining himself attacked by robbers. But he presently perceived who it was; and I soon after recollected myself: this being the second time of my life that I had appeared before him in such confusion.

He made me sit down and compose myself; and as soon as he had learned the cause of my fright, endeavoured to turn it into ridicule; but, seeing me too deeply affected with it, and that the impression it had made was not to be easily effaced, he changed his tone. “For shame (says he, with an air of severity) you neither deserve my friendship nor esteem; had I taken a quarter of the pains with one of my footmen which I have done with you, I had made a man of him: but you

are fit for nothing.”—“It is indeed, my lord, (answered I) too true. I had nothing good in me but what came from her, whom now I shall see no more; and am, therefore, good for nothing.” At this he smiled, and embraced me. “Come, come (says he) endeavour to compose yourself; to-morrow you will be a reasonable creature.” He then changed the conversation, and proposed to set out. The horses were accordingly ordered to be put to. In getting into the chaise, my lord whispered something to the postillion, who immediately drove off.

We travelled for some time without speaking. I was ~~so~~ taken up with my last night’s dream, that I heard and saw nothing; not even observing that the lake, which the day before was on my right hand, was now on my left. The rattling of the chaise upon the pavement, however, at length awoke me out of my lethargy; I looked up, and to my great surprise, found we were returned to Clarens. About a furlong from the gate, my lord ordered us to be set down; and taking me aside, “You see my design (said he) it has no need of further explanation: go, thou visionary mortal (continued he, pressing my hand between his) go, and see her again. Happy in exposing your follies only to your friends, make haste, and I will wait for you here; but, be sure you do

not return till you have removed that fatal veil which is woven in your brain."

What could I say? I left him without making any answer, and trembling as I advanced, slowly approached the house. What a part, said I to myself, am I going to act here? how dare I show myself? what pretext have I for this unexpected return? with what face can I plead my ridiculous terrors, and support the contemptuous looks of the generous Wolmar? In short, the nearer I drew to the house, the more childish my fears seemed to me, and the more contemptible my extravagant behaviour: my mind, however, still misgave me, and I went on, though every step more slowly, till I came to the court-yard, when I heard the door of the Elysium just open and shut again. Seeing no body come out, I made a tour round the aviary, keeping as close to it as possible: I then listened, and could here you conversing together; but though I could not distinguish a word you said, I thought I perceived something in the sound of your voice so languishing and tender, that I could not hear it without emotion; and in Eloisa's a sweet and affectionate accent, not only such as is usual to her, but so mild and peaceful as to convince me all was well.

This restored me to my senses at once, and woke me in good earnest from my dream. I perceived myself immediately so altered, that I laughed at my ridiculous fears; and while I re-

reflected that only a hedge and a few shrubs prevented me from seeing her alive and in good health, whom I imagined I should never see again, I renounced for ever my fearful and chimerical apprehensions; and determined, without more ado, to return without even seeing her. You may believe me, Clara, when I protest to you, that I not only did not see her, but went back, proud of not having been so weak as to push my credulity to the end, and of having at least done so much credit to myself, as not to have it said of a friend of Lord B——'s, that he could not get the better of a dream.

This, my dear cousin, is what I had to tell you, and is the last confession I have to make. The other particulars of our journey are not at all interesting; let it suffice, therefore, to assure you, that not only his lordship has been very well satisfied with me since, but that I am still more so with myself, who am more sensible of my cure than he can be. For fear of giving him any needless distrust, I concealed from him my not having actually seen you. When he asked me if the veil was drawn aside, I answered without hesitation in the affirmative, and we have not mentioned it since. Yes, cousin, the veil is drawn aside for ever; that veil which has so long hood-winked my reason. All my unruly passions are extinguished. I see and respect my duty.

You are both dearer to me than ever, but my heart knows no difference between you ; nor feels the least inclination to separate the inseparables.

We arrived the day before yesterday at Milan, and the day after to-morrow we shall leave it. In about a week we hope to be at Rome, and expect to find letters from you on our arrival. How tedious will seem the time before I shall see those two surprising persons who have so long troubled the repose of the greatest mind ! O Eloisa ! O Clara ! no woman that is not equal to you is worthy of such a man !

LETTER CXLVI.

FROM MRS. ORBE.

WE all waited impatiently to hear from you, so that you will easily guess how much pleasure your letters gave our little community ; but what you will hardly imagine is, that they should give me less than any other person in the house. They all were pleased that you had happily passed the Alps ; for my part I had no pleasure in reflecting that the Alps were between us.

With respect to the particulars of your return, we have said nothing of them to the Baron ; besides, I skipped over some of your soliloquies, in reading your letter in company. M. Wolmar

is so ingenuous, as only to laugh at you ; but Eloisa could not recollect the last moments of her dying mother, without shedding fresh tears. Your letter had no other effect upon her, than reviving her affliction.

As to myself, I will confess to you, my dear preceptor, that I am no longer surprised to see you in continual astonishment at yourself ; always committing some new folly, and always repenting of it : you have long passed your life in self-reproach over night, and in applauding yourself in the morning.

I will freely acknowledge to you, also, that the great effort of your courage, in turning back when so near us just as wise as you came, does not appear to me so extraordinary as it may to you. There seems to me more vanity in it than prudence ; and I believe, upon the whole, I should have liked a little less fortitude, with more discretion. From such a manner of running away, may not one ask to what purpose you came ? You were ashamed to show yourself, and it is of your being afraid to show yourself that you ought in fact to be ashamed. As if the pleasure of seeing your friends were not an ample recompence for the petty chagrin their railleury might give you. Ought you not to have thought yourself happy in the opportunity of diverting us with your bewildered looks ? As I could not laugh at you then, however, I will laugh at you now ;

though I lose half the pleasure in not seeing your confusion.

Unhappily, there is something worse than all this; which is, that I have caught your fears, without having the means of dispelling them. That dream of yours has something in it so horrible, that I am at once terrified and afflicted with it, in spite of all I can do. In reading your letter I am apt to blame your agitation; after I have read it I blame your security. It is impossible to see a sufficient reason for your being so much affected, and at the same time for your becoming tranquil. It is very strange that your fearful apprehensions should prevail till the very moment in which you might have been satisfied, and that you should stop there. Another step, a motion, a word had done the business. You were alarmed without reason, and composed again without cause: but you have infected me with terror which you no longer feel; and it appears, that if you have given an instance once in your life of your fortitude, it has been at my expence. Since the receipt of your fatal letter, my heart is constantly oppressed. I cannot approach Eloisa, without trembling at the thoughts of losing her. I think every now and then I see a deadly paleness overspread her countenance; and this morning, as I embraced her, tears burst involuntarily from me, and poured down my cheeks. O, that veil! that veil! There is something so prophetic

in it, that it troubles me every time I think of it. No, I cannot forgive you for not removing it when you had it in your power, and I fear I shall never have a moment's peace of mind till I see you again in company with her. You must own, that after having talked so long of philosophy, you have here given a very unseasonable proof of yours. Dream again, and come and see your friends; it were better for you to do this and be a *visionary mortal*, than to run away from them and be a philosopher.

It appears, by a letter of Lord B——'s to M. Wolmar, that he thinks seriously of coming to settle with us. As soon as he is determined, and his heart has made its choice, may you both return *steadfast and happy*! This is the constant prayer of our little community, and above all that of your friend,

CLARA ORBE.

P. S.—If you really heard nothing of our conversation in the Elysium, it is perhaps so much the better for you; for you know me to be vigilant enough to see some people without their seeing me, and severe enough to verify the proverb, that "*listeners seldom hear any good of themselves.*"

LETTER CXLVII.

FROM M. WOLMAR.

As I write to Lord B——, and explain myself so fully with respect to you, I have hardly any thing more to say at present than to refer you to his letter. Yours would perhaps require of me a return of civilities; but these I had rather make in actions than in words. To make you one of my family, to treat you as my brother, my friend; to make her you loved your sister; to put into your hands a paternal authority over my children; to invest you with my privileges, after having robbed you of yours; these are the compliments I have to make you. If, on your part, you justify my conduct, it will be sufficient praise. I have endeavoured to honour you with my esteem; it is yours to honour me by your merit. Let no other encomiums pass between us.

So far am I from being surprised at seeing you affected with a dream, that I see no very good reason for your reproaching yourself for being so. One dream more or less seems to be of no importance in such systematical gentlemen as yourself, whose very principles are so visionary.

What I reproach you for is less the effect of your dream, than the species of it; and that for a reason very different, perhaps, from what you

may imagine. A certain tyrant once condemned a man to death for dreaming that he had stabbed him. Recollect the reason he gave for that sentence, and make the application. What! you are going to determine the fate of your friend, and you are thinking of your old amours! Had it not been for the conversation of the preceding evening, I should never forgive you that dream. Think in the day-time of what you are going to do at Rome, and you will dream less at night of what is doing at Vevay.

The little French-woman is sick, which keeps Mrs. Wolmar so constantly employed that she has not time to write to you. Somebody, however, will willingly take upon themselves that agreeable task. Happy youth! to whose happiness every thing conspires! the rewards of virtue all await your merit. As to that of my good will, trouble no one with it: it is from you only I expect it.

LETTER CXLVIII.

TO M. WOLMAR.

LET this letter be kept to ourselves. Let the errors of the best of men be for ever buried in profound secrecy. In what a dangerous task have I engaged! O my sensible and generous friend! why do I not retain your counsel in my memory,

as I do your benevolence at my heart! Never did I before stand in more need of your prudence, nor did ever the apprehensions of falling short of it so embarrass the little I have. Ah! what is become of your paternal advice, your instruction, your knowledge? What will become of me without you? Yes, I would give up every flattering prospect in life to have you here, in this critical moment, though but for one week.

I have been deceived in all my conjectures: I have as yet done nothing but blunder. I was afraid only of the Marchioness. After having seen her, and been struck with admiration at her beauty and address, I applied myself with all my might to wean the affections of her noble loves from so attracting an object. Charmed with the thoughts of bringing him over to the side where I thought there was no danger, I launched out in the praise of Laura, and spoke of her with the esteem and admiration with which she had inspired me: in weakening his stronger attachment for her rival, I hoped, by degrees, entirely to destroy both. My lord readily gave into my design; and, exceeding even the bounds of complaisance, perhaps to punish my importunities, by alarming me on the other side, affected a much greater warmth of passion for Laura than he really felt. But what shall I say to him now? the ardour of his passion remains without any affectation. His heart, exhausted by so many trials,

was left in a state of weakness, of which she has taken the advantage. It would be difficult indeed for any man long to affect a passion for her which he did not feel. In fact, it is impossible to look upon this lovely unfortunate without being struck by her air and figure; a certain cast of languor and depression, which constantly shades her charming features, in damping the vivacity of her looks, renders them but the more affecting; even as the sun darts its rays through the passing clouds, so her eyes cast the more piercing looks through the clouds of grief that obscure their lustre. Her very dejection has all the grace of modesty; in seeing, one pities her; in hearing, one respects her. In short, I can avow, in justification of my friend, that I know only two men in the world who could see and converse with her without danger.

Oh, Wolmar! he is lost to reason. I see, and feel it; I own it to you with bitterness of heart. I tremble to think how far his extravagant passion may make him forget himself and his duty. I tremble lest that intrepid love of virtue, which makes him despise the opinion of the world, should hurry him into the other extreme, and lead him to trespass even the sacred laws of decorum and decency. Shall my Lord B—— contract such a marriage? Can you think it—under the eye of his friend too! who sees, who suffers it!—and who lies under infinite obligations to him!

No, he shall rip open my breast, and tear out my heart with his own hand, ere he shall thus abuse it.

But, what shall I do? how shall I behave myself? you know his impetuosity of temper. Argument will avail nothing; and his discourse of late has only increased my apprehensions for him. At first, I affected not to understand him, and reasoned indirectly in general maxims; he in turn affected not to understand me. If I endeavour to touch him a little more to the quick, he answers sententiously, and imagines he has refuted me. If I reply, and enforce my argument, he flies into a passion, and talks in a manner so unfriendly, that a real friend knows not how to answer him. You may believe that on this occasion I am neither timid nor bashful; when we are doing our duty, we are too apt to be proud and tenacious; but pride has nothing to do here; it is necessary I should succeed; and unsuccessful attempts will only prejudice better means. I hardly dare enter with him into any argument, for I every day experience the truth of what you told me, that he is a better reasoner than I, and that the way to win him to my party is not to irritate him by dispute. Besides, he looks a little cold upon me at present. Appearances would make one apt to think he is uneasy at my importunity. How this weakness debases a man in so many respects supe-

rior to the rest of mankind! the great, the sublime Lord B—— stands in awe of his friend, his creature, his pupil! it even seems, by some words he has let fall concerning the choice of his residence, if he does not marry, that he has a mind to try my fidelity, by opposing it to my interest. He well knows I ought not, neither can I, leave him. No, I will do my duty, and follow my benefactor. If I were base and mean, what should I gain by my perfidy? — Eloisa and her generous husband would not trust the education of their children to one who hath betrayed his friend. You have often told me, that the inferior passions are not easily converted from their pursuit; but that the superior ones may be armed against themselves. I imagined I might be able to make use of that maxim in the present case. In fact, the motives of compassion, of a contempt for the prejudices of the world, of habit, of every thing that determines my Lord B—— on this occasion, are of that inferior nature, and elude all my attacks: whereas, true love is inseparable from generosity, and by that one always has some hold of him. I have attempted that indirect method, and despair not of success. It may seem cruel; and to say truth, I have not done it without some repugnance: all circumstances, however, considered, I conceive I am doing service even to Laura herself. What would she do in the rank to which

she might be raised by marriage, but expose her former ignominy? but, how great may she not be in remaining what she is! If I know any thing of that extraordinary young lady, she is better formed to enjoy the sacrifice she has made, than the rank she ought to refuse. If this resource fails me, there remains one more in the magistracy, on account of their difference of religion, but this method shall not be taken till I am reduced to the last extremity, and have tried every other in vain. Whatever may happen, I shall spare nothing to prevent so unworthy and disgraceful an alliance. Believe me, my dear Wolmar, I shall be tenacious of your esteem to the latest hour of my life, and whatever my lord may write to you, whatever you may have said, depend on it, cost what it will, while this heart beats within my breast, Lauretta Pisana shall not be Lady B——.

If you approve of my measures, this letter needs no answer; if you think me in any wise mistaken, oblige me with your instructions. But be expeditious, for there is not a moment to lose. I shall have my letter directed by a strange hand: do the same by your answer. After having read what I have written, please, also, to burn my letter, and be silent as to its contents. This is the first and the only secret I ever desired you to conceal from my two cousins; and if I had dared

to confide more in my own judgment, you yourself should have known nothing of it*.

LETTER CXLIX.

MRS. WOLMAR TO MRS. ORBE.

THE courier from Italy seemed only to wait your departure, for his own arrival; as if to punish you for having staid only for him. Not that I myself made the pretty discovery of the cause of your loitering; it was my husband who observed, that after the horses had been put to at eight o'clock, you deferred your departure till eleven; not out of regard to us, but for a reason easy to be guessed at, from your asking twenty times if it was ten o'clock, because the post generally goes by at that time.

Yes, my dear cousin, you are caught; you cannot deny it. In spite of the prophetic Chailot, her Clara, so wild, or rather so discreet, has not been so to the end. You are caught in the same toils from which you took so much pains to

* For the better understanding this letter, the reader should have been made acquainted with the adventures of Lord B——, which at first I had indeed some notion of inserting in this collection. But, on second thoughts, I could not resolve to spoil the simplicity of this history of the two lovers, with the romances of his. It is better to leave something to the readers imagination.

extricate your friend, and have not been able to preserve that liberty yourself, to which you restored me. It is my turn to laugh now. Ah ! my dear friend, one ought to have your talents to know how to laugh like you, and give even to raillery the affecting turn and appearance of kindness. Besides, what a difference in our situation ! with what face can I divert myself with an evil, of which I am the cause, and from which you have taken upon yourself to free me. There is not a sentiment in your breast that does not awake a sense of gratitude in mine ; even your weakness being in you the effect of virtue. It is this which consoles and diverts me. My errors are to be lamented ; but one may laugh at the false modesty which makes you blush at a passion as innocent as yourself.

But to return to your Italian courier, and leave moralizing for a while. This courier, then, who has been so long in coming, you will ask what he has brought us. Nothing but good news of our friends, and a letter as big as a packet for you. Oho ! I see you smile and take breath now. As the letter is sent you, however, you will doubtless wait patiently to know what it contains. It may yet nevertheless be of some estimation, even though it did not come when expected : for it breathes such a tender——but I will only write news to you, and I dare say what I was going to say is none.

With that letter is come another from Lord B—— to my husband, with a great many compliments also for us. This contains some real news, which is so much the more unexpected, as the first was silent on the subject. Our friends at Rome were to set out the next day for Naples, where Lord B—— has some business; and from whence they are to go to see Mount Vesuvius. ———Can you conceive, my dear, that such a sight can be entertaining? but on their return to Rome, think; Clara, guess what may happen.— Lord B—— is on the point of being married—— not, I thank Heaven, to that unworthy Marchioness, who he tells us, on the contrary, is much indisposed. To whom then?—— To Laura, the amiable Laura, who——yet, what a marriage! our friend says not a word about it. Immediately after the marriage they will all three set out, and come hither, to take their future measures. What they are to be, my husband has not told me; but he expects that St. Preux will stay with us.

I must confess to you his silence gives me some little uneasiness; I cannot see clearly through it. I think I see an odd peculiarity of circumstances, and contest of human passions absolutely unintelligible. I cannot see how so good a man should contract so lasting an affection for so bad a woman as the Marchioness, or indeed, how a woman of

such a violent and cruel temper could entertain so ardent a love, if one may so call her guilty passion, for a man of so different a disposition.— Neither can I imagine, how a young creature, so generous, affectionate, and disinterested as Laura could be able to support her first dissoluteness of manners; how that flattering and deceitful tenderness of heart, which misleads our sex, should recover her; how love, which is the ruin of so many modest women, should make her chaste.

Will Lady B—— then come hither! Hither, my dear Clara! what do you think of it! After all, what a prodigy must that astonishing woman be, who, ruined by a dissolute and abandoned education, was reclaimed by her tenderness of heart, and whom love hath conducted to virtue! Ought any one to admire her more than I, who have acted quite contrary: who was led astray by inclination, when every thing else conspired to conduct me in the paths of virtue? I sunk not so low, it is true; but I have raised myself like her. Have I avoided so many snares, and made such sacrifices as she has made? From the lowest ignominy she has risen to the highest degree of honour, and is a thousand times more respectable than if she had never fallen. She has sense and virtue: what needs she more to resemble us? If it be impossible for a woman to repair the errors of her youth, what right have I to more indulgence than she? With whom can I hope to stand excused,

to what respect can I pretend, if I refuse to respect her ?

And yet, though my heart tells me this, my conscience speaks against it ; and, without being able to tell why, I cannot think it right that Lord — should contract such a marriage, and that his friends should be concerned in the affair. It is the force of prejudice ! so difficult is it to shake off the yoke of public opinion ! which, nevertheless, generally induces us to be ungrateful : the past good is effaced by the present ; but, is the past evil ever effaced by any present good ?

I hinted to my husband my uneasiness as to the conduct of St. Preux in this affair. “ He seems to me (I) to be ashamed to speak of it to my cousin : now he is incapable of baseness ; but he is too good and may have too much indulgence for the sins of a friend.”——“ No (answered he,) he does not know what he ought, and I know will consent to do so ; this is all I am at liberty to tell you at present of the matter ; but St. Preux is honest, and I will engage for him, you will be satisfied with his conduct.”—It is impossible, however, that Wolmar can deceive me, or St. Preux.

So positive an assurance, therefore, fully satisfied me ; and made me suspect my scruples to be the effect of a false delicacy, and that if I were less vain and more equitable, I should

find Laura more deserving the rank of Lady B——

But to take leave of her for the present, and return to ourselves. Do not you perceive too well, in reading this letter, that our friends are likely to return sooner than we expected? and is not your heart a little affected by it? Does it not flutter and beat quicker than ordinary? that heart too susceptible, and too nearly akin to mine? is it not apprehensive of the danger of living familiarly with a beloved object? to see him every day; to sleep under the same roof? and if my errors did not lessen me in your esteem, does not my example give you reason to fear for yourself? In your younger years, how many apprehensions for my safety did not your good sense and friendship suggest, which a blind passion made me despise! It is now, my dear friend, my turn to be apprehensive for you, and I have the better claim to your regard, as what I have to offer is founded on sad experience. Attend to me, then, ere it be too late; lest, having passed half your life in lamenting my errors, you should pass the other in lamenting your own. Above all things, place not too great a confidence in your gaiety of temper, which, though it may be a security to those who have nothing to fear, generally betrays those who are in real danger. You, my dear Clara, once laughed at love, but that was because you were a stranger to the passion; and,

not having felt its power, you thought yourself above its attacks. Love is avenged, and laughs in its turn at you. Learn to distrust its deceitful mirth, lest it should one day cost you an equal portion of grief. It is time, my dear friend, to lay you open to yourself; for hitherto you have not taken that interesting view: you are mistaken in your own character, and know not how to set a just value upon yourself. You confide in the opinion of Chaillot; who, because of your vivacity of disposition, judged you to be little susceptible of heart; but a heart like yours was beyond her talents to penetrate. Chaillot was incapable of knowing you, nor does any person in the world know you truly but myself. I have left you in your mistake so long as it could be of service to you, but at present it may be hurtful, and, therefore, it is necessary to undeceive you.

You are lively, and imagine yourself to have but little sensibility. How much, alas! are you deceived: your vivacity itself proves evidently the contrary. Is it not always exerted on sentimental subjects! does not even your pleasantry come from the heart? Your raillery is a greater proof of your affection than the compliments of others; you smile, but your smiles penetrate our hearts; you laugh, but your laughter draws from us the tears of affection: and I have remarked,

that, among those who are indifferent to you, you are always serious.

If you really were no other than you pretend to be, tell me, what motive could have so forcibly united us? Where had been those bonds of unparalleled friendship that now subsist between us? By what miracle should such an attachment give the preference to a heart so little capable of it? Can she who lived but for her friend be incapable of love? she who would have left father, husband, relations, and country, to have followed her? What have I done in comparison of this! I, who have confessedly a susceptible heart, and permitted myself to love; yet, with all my sensibility, have hardly been able to return your friendship! These contradictions have instilled into your head as whimsical an idea of your own character as such a giddy brain can conceive: which is, to conceit yourself at once the warmest friend and the coldest lover. Incapable of disowning those gentle ties with which you perceived you were bound, you thought yourself incapable of being fettered by any other. You thought nothing in the world could affect you but Eloisa; as if those hearts which are by nature susceptible, could be affected but by one object; and as if, because you love no other than me, I could be the proper object of your affection. You pleasantly asked me once, if souls were of a different sex. No, my dear, the soul is of no sex;

but its affections make that distinction, and you begin to be too sensible of it. Because the first lover that offered himself did not affect you, you immediately concluded no other could: because you was not in love with your suitor, you concluded you could never be in love with any one. When he became your husband, however, you loved him, and that with so ardent an affection, that it injured even the intimacy with your friend: that heart, so little susceptible, as you pretend, could annex to love as tender a supplement to satisfy the fond desires of a worthy man.

Ah, my poor cousin! it is your task for the future to resolve your own doubts, and if it be true,

Ch' un freddo amante è mal sicuro amico,

That a cold lover is a faithless friend,

I am greatly afraid I have at present one reason more than ever I had to rely upon you. But to go on with what I had to say to you on this subject.

I suspect that you were in love much sooner than you perhaps imagine; or, at least, that the same inclination which ruined me would have seduced you, had I not been first caught in the snare. Can you conceive a sentiment so natural and agreeable could be so slow in its birth? Can you conceive that at our age we could either of

us live in a familiarity with an amiable young man without danger, or that the conformity so general in our taste and inclination should not extend to this particular? No, my dear, you, I am certain, would have loved him, if I had not loved him first. Less weak, though not less susceptible, you might have been more prudent than I without being more happy. But what inclination would have prevailed on your generous mind over the horror you would have felt at the infidelity of betraying your friend! It was our friendship that saved you from the snares of love; you respected my lover with the same friendship, and thus redeemed your heart at the expence of mine.

These conjectures are not so void of foundation as you may imagine; and had I a mind to recollect those times which I could wish to forget, it would not be difficult for me to trace even in the care you imagined you took only in my concerns, a further care, still more interesting, in those of the object of my affection. Not daring to love him yourself, you encouraged me to do it; you thought each of us necessary to the happiness of the other, and, therefore, that heart, which has not its equal in the world, loved us both the more tenderly. Be assured; that, had it not been for your own weakness, you would not have been so indulgent to me; but you would have reproached yourself for a just severity towards me, with an

imputation of jealousy. You were conscious of having no right to contend with a passion in me, which ought, nevertheless, to have been subdued; and, being more fearful of betraying your friend than of not acting discreetly, you thought, in offering up your own happiness to ours, you had made a sufficient sacrifice to virtue.

This, my dear Clara, is your history; thus hath your despotic friendship laid me under the necessity of being obliged to you for my shame, and of thanking you for my errors. Think not, however, that I would imitate you in this. I am no more disposed to follow your example than you mine; and as you have no reason to fear falling into my errors, I have no longer, thank Heaven! the same reasons for granting you indulgence. What better use can I make of that virtue to which you restored me, than to make it instrumental in the preservation of yours?

Let me, therefore, give you my further advice on the present occasion. The long absence of our preceptor has not lessened your regard for him. Your being left again at liberty, and his return, have given rise to opportunity, which love hath been ingenious enough to improve. It is not a new sentiment produced in your heart; it is only one, which, long concealed there, has at length seized this occasion to discover itself. Proud enough to avow it to yourself, you are

perhaps impatient to confess it to me. That confession might seem to you almost necessary to make it quite innocent; in becoming a crime in your friend, it ceased to be one in you, and perhaps you only gave yourself up to the passion you so many years contended with, the more effectually to cure your friend.

I was sensible, my dear, of all this: and was little alarmed at a passion which I saw would be my own protection, and on account of which you have nothing to reproach yourself. The winter we passed together in peace and friendship, gave me yet more hopes of you; for I saw that so far from losing your vivacity, you seemed to have improved it. I frequently observed you affectionate, earnest, attentive: but frank in your professions, ingenuous even in your raillery, unreserved and open, and, in your liveliest sallies, the picture of innocence.

Since our conversation in the *Elysium*, I have not so much reason to be satisfied with you. I find you frequently sad and pensive. You take as much pleasure in being alone as with your friend: you have not changed your language, but your accent; you are more cautious in your pleasantries; you do not mention him so often; one would think you were in constant fear lest he should overhear you; and it is easy to see by your uneasiness, that you want to hear from him much oftener than you confess.

I tremble, my good cousin, lest you should not be sensible of the worst of your disorder, and that the shaft has pierced deeper than you seem to be aware of. Probe your heart, my dear, to the bottom; and then tell me, again I repeat it, tell me if the most prudent woman does not run a risk by being long in the company of a beloved object; tell me if the confidence which ruined me can be entirely harmless to you; you are both at liberty; this is the very circumstance that makes opportunity dangerous. In a mind truly virtuous, there is no weakness will get the better of conscience, and I agree with you, that one has always fortitude enough to avoid committing a wilful crime: but, alas! what is a constant protection against human weakness? Reflect, however, on consequences; think on the effects of shame. We must pay a due respect to ourselves, if we expect to receive it from others; for how can we flatter ourselves that others will pay to us what we have not for ourselves? or where can we think she will stop in the career of vice, who sets out without fear? These arguments I should use even to women who pay no regard to religion and morality, and have no rule of conduct but the opinion of others: but with you, whose principles are those of virtue and Christianity, who are sensible of, and respect your duty, who know and follow other rules than those of public

opinion, your first honour is to stand-excused by your own conscience, and that is the most important.

Would you know where you are wrong in this whole affair? It is, I say again, in being ashamed of entertaining a sentiment which you have only to declare, to render it perfectly innocent: but with all your vivacity, no creature in the world is more timid. You affect pleasantry only to show your courage, your poor heart trembling all the while for fear. In pretending to ridicule your passion, you do exactly like children, who sing in the dark because they are afraid. O my dear friend, reflect on what you yourself have often said; it is a false shame which leads to real disgrace, and virtue never blushes at any thing but what is criminal. Is love in itself a crime? does it not, on the contrary, consist of the most refined, as well as the most pleasing, of all inclinations? Is not its end laudable and virtuous? Does it ever enter into base and vulgar minds? Does it not animate only the great and noble? Does it not ennoble their sentiments? Does it not raise them even above themselves? Alas! if to be prudent and virtuous we must be insensible to love, among whom could virtue find its votaries on earth? Among the refuse of nature and the dregs of mankind!

Why then do you reproach yourself? Have you not made choice of a worthy man? Is he not

disengaged? Are not you so too? Does he not deserve all your esteem? Has he not the greatest regard for you? Will you not be even too happy in conferring happiness on a friend so worthy of that name; paying, with your hand and heart, the debts long ago contracted by your friend; and in doing him honour by raising him to yourself, as a reward to unsuccessful, to persecuted merit.

I see what petty scruples still lie in your way. The receding from a declared resolution, by taking a second husband; the exposing your weakness to the world; the marrying a needy adventurer; for low minds, always lavish of scandal, will doubtless so call him. These are the reasons which make you rather ashamed of your passion than willing to justify it; that make you desirous of stifling it in your bosom, rather than render it legitimate. But, pray, does the shame lie in marrying the man one loves, or in loving without marrying him? Between these lies your choice. The regard you owe to the deceased requires that you should respect his widow so much, as rather to give her a husband than a gallant: and, if your youth obliges you to make choice of one to supply his place, is it not paying a further regard to his memory, to fix that choice upon the man he most esteemed when living.

As to his inferiority in point of fortune, I shall

perhaps only offend you in relpying to so frivolous an objection, when it is opposed to good sense and virtue. I know of no debasing inequality, but that which arises either from character or education. To whatever rank a man of a mean disposition and low principle may rise, an alliance with him will always be scandalous.— But a man educated in the sentiments of virtue and honour, is equal to any other in the world, and may take place in whatever rank he pleases. You know what were the sentiments of your father, when your friend was proposed for me. His family is reputable though obscure; he is every where deservedly esteemed. With all this, was he the lowest of mankind, he would deserve your consideration: for it is surely better to derogate from nobility than virtue; and the wife of a mechanic is more reputable than the mistress of a prince.

I have a glimpse of another kind of embarrassment, in the necessity you lie under of making the first declaration: for, before he presumes to aspire to you, it is necessary you should give him permission; this is one of the circumstances justly attending an inequality of rank, which often obliges the superior to make the most mortifying advances.

As to this difficulty, I can easily forgive you, and even confess it would appear to me of real consequence, if I could not find out a method to

remove it. I hope you depend so far on me as to believe this may be brought about without your being seen in it; and on my part, I depend so much on my measures, that I shall undertake it with assurance of success; for, notwithstanding what you both formerly told me of the difficulty of converting a friend into a lover, if I can read that heart which I too long studied, I do not believe that on this occasion any great art will be necessary. I propose, therefore, to charge myself with this negotiation, to the end that you may indulge yourself in the pleasure of his return, without reserve, regret, danger, or scandal. Ah! my dear cousin! how delighted shall I be to unite for ever two hearts so well formed for each other, and which have been long united in mine. May they still, if possible, be more closely united! may we have but one heart amongst us! Yes, Clara, you will serve your friend by indulging your love, and I shall be more certain of my own sentiments, when I shall no longer make a distinction between him and you.

But if, notwithstanding what I have alledged, you will not give into this project, my advice is, at all events, to banish this dangerous man; always to be dreaded by one or the other, for, be it as it may, the education of our children is still less important to us than the virtue of their mothers. I leave you to reflect during your journey

on what I have written. We will talk further about it on your return.

I sent this letter directly to Geneva; left, as you were to lie but one night at Lausanne, it should not find you there. Pray, bring me a good account of that little republic. From the agreeable description, I should think you happy in the opportunity of seeing it, if I could set any store by pleasures purchased with the absence of my friends. I never loved grandeur, and at present I hate it, for having deprived me of so many years of your company. Neither you nor I, my dear, went to buy our wedding clothes at Geneva; and yet, however deserving your brother may be, I much doubt whether your sister-in-law will be more happy, with her Flanders lace and India silks, than we in our native simplicity. I charge you, however, notwithstanding my ill-natured reflections, to engage them to celebrate their nuptials at Clarens. My father hath written to yours, and my husband to the bride's mother, to invite them hither. These letters you will find enclosed: please to deliver them, and enforce their invitations with your interest. This is all I could do, in order to be present at the ceremony; for I declare to you, I would not upon any account leave my family. Adieu! Let me have a line from you, at least to let me know when I am to expect you here. It is now the second day since

you left me, and I know not how I shall support two days more without you.

P. S.—While I was writing this letter, Miss Harriet truly must give herself the air of writing to her mamma too. As I always like children should write their own thoughts, and not those which are dictated to them, I indulged her curiosity; and let her write just what she pleased, without altering a word. This makes the third letter enclosed. I doubt, however, whether this is what you look for in casting your eye over the contents of the packet. But, for the other letter you need not look long, as you will not find it. It is directed to you at Clarens; and at Clarens only it ought to be read; so take your measures accordingly.

L E T T E R C L.

HARRIET TO HER MOTHER.

WHERE are you then, mamma? They say at Geneva; which is such a long, long way off, that one must ride two days, all day long, to reach you: surely, mamma, you do not intend to go round the world; my little papa is set out this morning for Etange; my little grand-papa is gone a-hunting; my little mamma is gone into her closet to write; and there is nobody with

me but Parnette and the French-woman. Indeed, mamma, I do not know how it is ; but, since our good friend has left us, we are all scattered about strangely. You began first, mamma ; you soon began to be tired, when you had nobody left to teaze : but what is much worse since you are gone is, that my little mamma is not so good-humoured as when you were here. My little boy is very well, but he does not love you, because you did not dance him yesterday as you used to do. As for me, I believe I should love you a little bit still, if you would return quickly, that one might not be so dull. But, if you would make it up with me quite, you must bring my little boy something that would please him. To quiet him, indeed, would not be very easy ; you would be puzzled to know what to do with him. O that our good friend was but here now ! for it is as he said ; my fine fan is broke to pieces, my blue skirt is torn all to bits, my white frock is in tatters ; my mittens are not worth a farthing. Fare you well, mamma ; I must here end my letter, for my little mamma has finished hers, and is coming out of her closet. I think her eyes are red, but I durst not say so : in reading this, however, she will see I observed it. My good mamma, you are certainly very naughty to make my little mamma cry.

P. S.—Give my love to my grand-papa, to my uncles, to my new aunt and her mamma, and

to every body ; tell them I would kiss them all, and you to, mamma ; but that you are all so far off, I cannot reach you.

LETTER CLI.

MRS. ORBE TO MRS. WOLMAR.

I CANNOT leave Lausanne without writing you a line to acquaint you of my safe arrival here ; not, however, so cheerfully disposed as I could wish. I promised myself much pleasure in a journey which you have been so often tempted to take ; but, in refusing to accompany me, you have made it almost disagreeable ; and how should it be otherwise ? when it is troublesome, I have all the trouble to myself, and when it is tolerably agreeable, I regret your not being with me to partake of the pleasure. I had nothing to say, it is true, against your reasons for staying at home ; but you must not think I was therefore satisfied with them. If you do, indeed my good cousin you are mistaken ; for the very reason why I am dissatisfied is, that I have no right to be so. I wonder you are not ashamed of yourself, to have always the best of the argument, and to prevent your friend from having what she likes, without leaving her one good reason to find fault with you. All had gone to wreck and ruin, no doubt, had you left your husband, your

family, and your little marmottes in the lurch for one week ; it had been a wild scheme, to be sure ; but I should have liked you a hundred times the better for it ; whereas, in aiming to be all perfection, you are good for nothing at all, and are only fit to keep company with angels.

Notwithstanding our past disagreement, I could not help being moved at the sight of my friends and relations ; who, on their part, received me with pleasure ; or, at least, with a profusion of civilities. I can give you no account of my brother, till I am better acquainted with him. With a tolerable figure, he has a good deal of the formal air of the country he comes from. He is serious, cold, and I think has a surly haughtiness in his disposition, which makes me apprehensive for his wife, that he will not prove so tractable a husband as ours ; but will take upon him, a good deal of the lord and master.

My father was so delighted to see me, that he even left unfinished the perusal of an account of a great battle which the French, as if to verify the prediction of our friend, have lately gained in Flanders. Thank Heaven, he was not there ! Can you conceive the intrepid Lord B—— would stand to see his countrymen run away, or that he would have joined them in their flight ? No, never ; he would sooner have rushed a thousand times on death.

But, a-propos, of our friend—our other friend

hath not written for some time. Was not yesterday the day for the courier to come from Italy? If you receive any letters, I hope you will not forget I am a party concerned in the news.

Adieu! my dear cousin; I must set out. I shall expect your letters at Geneva, where we hope to arrive to-morrow by dinner-time. As for the rest you may be assured, that, by some means or other, you shall be at the wedding; and that, if you absolutely will not come to Lausanne, I will come with my whole company to plunder Clarens, and drink up all the wine that is to be found in the town.

LETTER CLII.

MRS. ORBE TO MRS. WOLMAR.

UPON my word, my dear, you have read me a charming lecture! you keep it up to a miracle! you seem to depend, however, too much on the salutary effect of your sermons. Without pretending to judge whether they would formerly have lulled your preceptor to sleep, I can assure you they do not put me to sleep at present; on the contrary, that which you sent me yesterday was so far from affecting me with drowsiness, that it kept me awake all night. I bar, however, the remarks of that Argus, your husband,

if he should see the letter. But I will write in some order, and I protest to you, you had better burn your fingers than show it him.

If I should be very methodical, and recapitulate with you article for article, I should usurp your privilege; I had better, therefore, set them down as they come into my head; to affect a little modesty also, and not give you too much fair play, I will not begin with our travellers, or the courier from Italy. At the worst, if it should so happen, I shall only have my letter to write over again, and to reverse it, by putting the beginning at the latter end. I am determined, however, to begin with the supposed Lady B——. I can assure you I am offended at the very title; nor shall I ever forgive St. Preux for permitting her to take it, Lord B—— for conferring it on her, or you for acknowledging it. Shall Eloisa Wolmar receive Lauretta Pisana into her house! permit her to live with her!—think on it, child, again. Would not such a condescension in you be the most cruel mortification to her? Can you be ignorant that the air you breathe is fatal to infamy? will the poor unfortunate dare to mix her breath with yours? will she dare to approach you? She would be as much affected by your presence as a creature possessed would be at the sacred relics in the hand of the exorcist: your looks would make her sink

into the earth ; the very sight of you would kill her.

Not that I despise the unhappy Laura ; God forbid. On the contrary, I admire and respect her, the more as her reformation is heroic and extraordinary. But is it sufficient to authorise those mean comparisons by which you debase yourself ; as if in the indulgence of the greatest weakness there was not something in true love that is a constant security to our person, and which made us tenacious of our honour ? but I comprehend and excuse you. You have but a confused view of low and distant objects : you look down from your sublime and elevated station upon the earth, and see no inequalities on its surface. Your devout humility knows how to take an advantage even of your virtue.

But what end will all this serve ? will our natural sensations make the less impression ? Will our self-love be less active ? In spite of your arguments you feel a repugnance at this match : you tax your sensations with pride ; you would strive against them and attribute them to prejudice. But tell me, my dear, how long has the scandal attendant on vice consisted in mere opinion ; what friendship do you think can possibly subsist between you and a woman, before whom one cannot mention chastity or virtue without making her burst into tears of shame, without renewing her sorrows, without even insulting

her penitence? Believe me, my dear, we may respect Laura, but we ought not to see her; to avoid her is the regard which modest women owe to her merit: it would be cruel to make her suffer in our company.

I will go farther. You say your heart tells you this marriage ought not to take place. Is not this as much as to tell you it will not? Your friend says nothing about it in his letter! in the letter which he wrote to me! and yet you say this letter is a very long one—and then comes the discourse between you and your husband—that husband of yours is a fly-boots, and ye are a couple of cheats thus to trick me out of the news ye have heard. But then your husband's sentiments!—methinks his sentiments were not so necessary; particularly for you who have seen the letter, nor indeed were they for me, who have not seen it; for I am more certain of the conduct of your friend from my own sentiments, than from all the wisdom of philosophy.

See there, now!—did I not tell you so! that intruder will be thrusting himself in, nobody knows how. For fear he should come again, however, as we are now got into his chapter, let us go through it, that it may be over, and we may have nothing to do with him again.

Let us not bewilder ourselves with conjectures. Had you not been Eloisa, had not your friend been your lover, I know not what business he

would now have had with you, nor what I should have had to do with him. All I know is, that if my ill stars had so ordered it that he had first made love to me, it had been all over with his poor head: for whether I am a fool or not, I should certainly have made him one. But what signifies what I might have been? let us come to what I am. Attached by inclination to you from our earliest infancy, my heart has been in a manner absorbed by yours; affectionate and susceptible as I was, I of myself was incapable of love or sensibility. All my sentiments came from you; you alone stood in the place of the whole world, and I lived only to be your friend. Chailot saw all this, and founded on it the judgment she passed on me. In what particular, my dear, have you found her mistaken.

You know I looked upon your friend as a brother: as the son of my mother was the lover of my friend. Neither was it my reason, but my heart that gave him this preference. I should have been even more susceptible than I am, had I never experienced any other love. I caressed you, in caressing the dearest part of yourself, and the cheerfulness which attended my embraces was a proof of their purity. For doth a modest woman ever behave so to the man she loves? did you behave thusⁿ to him?—No Eloisa; love in a female heart is cautious and timid; reserve

and modesty are all its advances ; it discloses by endeavouring to hide itself, and whenever it confers the favour of its caresses, it well knows how to set a value upon them. Friendship is prodigal, but love is avaricious and sparing.

I confess, indeed, that too intimate connexions at his age and mine are dangerous ; but, with both our hearts engaged by the same object, we were so accustomed to place it between us, that without annihilating you, at least, it was impossible for us to come together. Even that familiarity, so dangerous on every other occasion, was then my security. Our sentiments depend on our ideas, and when these have once taken a certain turn, they are not easily perverted. We had talked together too much in one strain to begin upon another ; we had advanced too far to return back the way we came ; love is jealous of its prerogative, and will make its own progress ; it does not choose that friendship should meet it half way. In short, I am still of the same opinion, that criminal caresses never take place between those that have been long used to the endearing embraces of innocence. In aid of my sentiments came the man destined by Heaven to constitute the momentary happiness of my life. You know, cousin, he was young, well made, honest, complaisant, and solicitous to please ; it is true, he was not so great a master in love as your friend ; but it was me that he loved : and, when

the heart is free, the passion which is addressed to ourselves hath always in it something contagious. I returned his affections, therefore, with all that remained of mine, and his share was such as left him no room to complain of his choice. With all this, what had I to apprehend? I will even go so far as to confess that the prerogatives of the husband, joined to the duties of a wife, relaxed for a moment the ties of friendship; and that after my change of condition, giving myself up to the duties of my new station, I became a more affectionate wife than I was a friend: but in returning to you, I have brought back two hearts instead of one, and have not since forgot that I alone am charged with that double obligation.

What, my dear friend, shall I say further? At the return of our old preceptor, I had, as it were, a new acquaintance to cultivate: methought I looked upon him with very different eyes; my heart fluttered as he saluted me, in a manner I had never felt before; and the more pleasure that emotion gave me, the more it made me afraid. I was alarmed at a sentiment which seemed criminal, and which perhaps would not have existed had it not been innocent. I too plainly perceived that he was not, nor could be, any longer your lover; I was too sensible that his heart was disengaged, and that mine was so too. You know

the rest, my dear cousin ; my fears, my soruples were, I see, as well known to you as to myself. My unexperienced heart was so intimidated by sensations so new to it, that I even reproached myself for the earnest desire I felt to rejoin you ; as if that desire had not been the same before the return of our friend. I was uneasy that he should be in the very place where I myself most inclined to be, and believe I should not have been so much displeased to find myself less desirous of it, as at conceiving that it was not entirely on your account. At length, however, I returned to you, and began to recover my confidence. I was less ashamed of my weakness after having confessed it to you. I was even less ashamed of it in your company : I thought myself protected in turn, and ceased to be afraid of myself. I resolved, agreeably to your advice, not to change my conduct towards him. Certainly a greater reserve would have been a kind of declaration, and I was but too likely to let slip involuntary ones, to induce me to make any directly. I continued, therefore, to trifle with him through bashfulness, and to treat him familiarly through modesty : but, perhaps, all this, not being so natural as formerly, was not attended with the same propriety, nor exerted to the same degree. From being a trisler, I turned a downright fool ; and what perhaps increased my assurance was, I

found I could be so with impunity. Whether it was your example that inspired me, or whether it be that Eloisa refines every thing that approaches her, I found myself perfectly tranquil, while nothing remained of my first emotion, but the most pleasing, yet peaceful sensations, which required nothing more than the tranquillity I possessed.

Yes, my dear friend, I am as susceptible and affectionate as you; but I am so in a different manner. Perhaps, with more lively passions, I am less able to govern them, and that very cheerfulness, which has been so fatal to the innocence of others, has preserved mine. Not that it has been always easy, I confess; any more than it is to remain a widow at my years, and not be sometimes sensible that the day time constitutes but one half of our lives. Nay, notwithstanding the grave face you put on the matter, I imagine your case does not differ in that greatly from mine. Mirth and pleasantry may then afford no unreasonable relief; and perhaps be a better preservative than graver lessons. How many times, in the stillness of the night, when the heart is all open to itself, have I driven impertinent thoughts out of my mind, by studying tricks for the next day! how many times have I not averted the danger of a private conversation by an extravagant fancy! There is always, my dear, when one

is weak, a time wherein gaiety becomes serious : but that time will not come to me.

These are at least my sentiments of the matter, and what I am not ashamed to confess in answer to yours. I readily confirm all that I said in the *Elysium*, as to the growing passion I perceived, and the happiness I had enjoyed during the winter. I indulged myself freely in the pleasing reflections of being always in company with the person I loved, while I desired nothing further ; and, if that opportunity had subsisted, I should have coveted no other. My cheerfulness was the effect of contentment, and not of artifice. I turned the pleasure of conversing with him into drollery, and perceived that in contenting myself with laughing, I was not paving the way for future sorrow.

I could not, indeed, help thinking sometimes, that my continual playing upon him gave him less real displeasure than he affected. The cunning creature was not angry at being offended, and if he was a long time before he could be brought to temper, it was only that he might enjoy the pleasure of being entreated. Again, I in my turn have frequently laid hold of such occasions to express a real tenderness for him, appearing all the while to make a jest for him : so that you would have been puzzled to say which was the most of a child. One day I remember, when you was absent, he was playing at chess with

your husband, while I and the little French-woman were diverting ourselves at shuttle cock, in the same room; I gave her the signal, and kept my eye on our philosopher; who, I found, by the boldness of his looks, and the readiness of his moves, had the best of the game. As the table was small, the chess-board hung over its edge; I watched my opportunity, therefore, and without seeming to design it, gave the board a knock with a back-stroke of my racquet, and overturned the whole game on the floor. You never in your life saw a man in such a passion: he was even so enraged, that when I gave him his choice of a kiss or a box on the ear by way of penance, he sullenly turned away from me as I presented him my cheek. I asked pardon, but to no purpose: he was inflexible, and I doubt not that he would have left me on my knees, had I condescended to kneel for it. I put an end to his resentment, however, by another offence, which made him forget the former, and we were better friends than ever.

I could never have extricated myself so well by any other means; and I once perceived that, if our play had become serious, it might have proved too much so. This was one evening when he played with us that simple and affecting duo of Leo's *Vado a morir ben mio*. You sung indeed with indifference enough: but I did not;

for just as we came to the most pathetic part of the song, he leaned forward, and as my hand lay upon the harpsichord, imprinted on it a kiss, whose impression I felt at my heart. I am not very well acquainted with the ardent kisses of love ! but this I can say, that mere friendship, not even ours, ever gave or received any thing like that. After such moments, what is the consequence of reflecting on them in solitude, and of bearing them constantly in memory ? for my part, I was so much affected at the time, that I sang out of tune, and put the music out. We went to dancing ; I made the philosopher dance ; we eat little or nothing ; sat up very late ; and, though I went to bed weary, I only dozed till morning.

I have, therefore, very good reason for not laying any restraint on my humour, or changing my manners. The times that will make such an alteration necessary is so near, that it is not worth while to anticipate it. The time to be prudish and reserved will come but too soon. While I am in my twenties, therefore, I shall make use of my privilege ; for when once turned of thirty, people are no longer wild without being ridiculous ; and your find-fault of a husband hath assurance enough to tell me already, that I shall be allowed but six months longer to dress a fallad with my fingers. Patience ! to retort his sarcasm, however, I tell him I will dress it for

him in that manner for these six years to come, and if I do, I protest to you he shall eat it—but to return from any ramble. If we have not the absolute command over our sentiments, we have at least some over our conduct. I could, without doubt, have requested of Heaven, a heart more at ease; but may I be able to my last hour to plead at its dread tribunal a life as innocent as that which I passed this winter! In fact, I have nothing in the least to reproach myself with, respecting the only man in whose power it might be to make me criminal. It is not quite the same, my dear, since his departure: being accustomed to think of him in his absence, I think of him every hour in the day; and, to confess the truth, find him more dangerous in idea than in person. When he is absent, I am over head and ears in love; when present, I am only whimsical. Let him return, and I shall be cured of all my fears. The chagrin his absence gives me, however, is not a little aggravated by my uneasiness at his dream. If you have placed all to the account of love, therefore, you are mistaken; friendship has had part in my uneasiness. After the departure of our friends, your looks were pale and changed; I expected you every moment to fall sick. Not that I am credulous: I am only fearful. I know very well that a bad dream does not necessarily produce a sinister event; but I

am always afraid lest such an event should succeed it. Not one night's rest could I get for that unlucky dream, till I saw you recover your former bloom. Could I have suspected the effects his anxiety would have had on me, without knowing any thing of it, I would certainly have given every thing I had in the world that he should have shown himself, when he came back so much like a fool from Villeneuve.

At length, however, my fears vanished with your suspicious looks ; your health and appetite, having a greater effect on me than your pleasantries. The arguments these sustained at table against my apprehensions, in time dissipated them. To increase our happiness our friend is on his return, and I am in every respect delighted. His return, so far from alarming me, gives me confidence ; and as soon as we see him again, I shall fear nothing for your life, nor my repose. In the mean time, be careful, dear cousin, of my friend ; and be under no apprehensions for yours ; she will take care of herself, I will engage for her. And yet I have still a pain at my heart—I feel an oppression which I cannot account for. Ah ! my dear, to think that we may one day part for ever ! that one may survive the other ! how unhappy will she be on whom that lot shall fall ! she will either remain little worthy to live, or lifeless before her death.

You will ask me, to what purpose is all this

vain lamentation? You will say, Fie on these ridiculous terrors! instead of talking of death, let us choose a more entertaining topic, and talk about your marriage. Your husband has indeed long entertained such a notion, and perhaps, if he had never spoken of it to me, it would never have come into my head. I have since thought of it now and then, but always with disdain. It would be absolutely making an old woman of me; for, if I should have any children by a second marriage, I should certainly conceit myself the grandmother of those of the first. You are certainly very good to take upon yourself so readily to spare the blushes of your friend, and to look upon your taking that trouble as an instance of your charitable benevolence. For my own part, nevertheless, I can see very well that all the reasons founded on your obliging solicitude are not equal to the least of mine against a second marriage.

To be serious, I am not mean-spirited enough to number among those reasons any reluctance I should have to break an engagement rashly made with myself, nor the fear of being censured for doing my duty, nor an inequality in point of fortune in a circumstance where that person reaps the greatest honour to whom the other would be obliged for his: but, without repeating what I have so often told you concerning my love of inde-

pendency and natural aversion to the marriage-yoke, I will abide by only one objection, and this I draw from those sacred dictates which nobody in the world pays a greater regard to than yourself. Remove this obstacle, cousin, and I give up the point. Amidst all those airs of mirth and drollery, which give you so much alarm, my conscience is perfectly easy. The remembrance of my husband excites not a blush; I even take pleasure to think him a witness of my innocence; for why should I be afraid to do that now he is dead, which I used to do when he was living? but will this be the case, Eloisa, if I should violate those sacred engagements which united us; if I should swear to another that everlasting love, which I have so often swore to him; if my divided heart should rob his memory of what it bestowed on his successor, and be incapable, without offending one, to discharge the obligations it owes the other? Will not that form, now so pleasing to my imagination, fill me with horror and affright? will it not be ever present to poison my delight? and will not his remembrance, which now constitutes the happiness of my life, be my future torment? With what face can you advise me to take a second husband, after having vowed never to do the like yourself, as if the same reasons which you give me were not as applicable to yourself in the same circumstances? They were friends, you say, and loved each other. So

much the worse. With what indignation will not his shade behold a man who was dear to him usurp his rights, and seduce his wife from her fidelity? In short, though it were true that I owed no obligation to the deceased, should I owe none to the dear pledge of his love? and can I believe he would ever have chosen me, had he foreseen that I should ever have exposed his only child to see herself undistinguished among the children of another? Another word, and I have done: who told you, pray, that all the obstacles between us arise from me? In answering for him, have you not rather consulted your will than your power? Or, were you certain of his consent, do you make no scruple to offer me a heart exhausted by a former passion? do you think that mine ought to be content with it, and that I might be happy with a man I could not make for? Think better of it, my dear cousin. Not requiring a greater return of love than I feel, I should not be satisfied with less, and I am too virtuous a woman to think the pleasing my husband a matter of indifference. What security have you, then, for the completion of your hopes? Is the pleasure he may take in my company, which may be only the effect of friendship; is that transitory delight, which at his age may arise only from the difference of sex: is this, I say, a sufficient foundation? If such pleasure had produced any lasting sentiment, is it to be thought he would have

been so profoundly silent, not only to me, but to you, and even to your husband, by whom an eclaircissement of that nature could not fail of being favourably received.

Has he ever opened his lips on this head to any one? In all the private conversations I have had with him, he talked of nobody but you. In those which you have had, did he ever say any thing of me? How can I imagine that, if he had concealed a secret of this kind in his breast, I should not have perceived him to be under some constraint, or that it would not, by some indiscretion or other, have escaped him? Nay, since his departure, which of us does he most frequently mention in his letters? which of us is the subject of his dreams? I admire that you should think me so tender and susceptible, and should not at the same time suppose that my heart would suggest all this. But I see through your device, my sweet friend; it is only to authorise your pretensions to reprisals, that you charge me with having formerly saved my heart at the expence of yours. But I am not so to be made the dupe of your subtilty. And so here is an end of my confession; which I have made, not to contradict, but to set you right; having nothing further to say on this head, than to acquaint you with my resolution. You now know my heart as well, if not better, than I do. My honour, my happiness, are equally dear to you as to myself; and, in

the present tranquillity of your passions, you will be the best able to judge of the means to secure both the one and the other. Take my conduct, therefore, under your direction. I submit it entirely to you. Let us return to our natural state, and reciprocally change our employment; we shall both do the better for it: do you govern, and you shall find me tractable: let it be your place to direct what I should do, and it shall be mine to follow your directions.

Take my heart, and enclose it up in yours; what business have inseparables for two? But to return to our travellers; though to say the truth, I have already said so much about one, that I hardly dare speak a word about the other, for fear you should remark too great a difference in my style, and that even my friendship for the generous Englishman should betray too much regard for the amiable Swiss. Besides, what can I say about letters I have not seen? you ought at least to send me that of Lord B——. But you durst not send it without the other. It is very well. You might, however, have done better. Well, recommend me to your duennas of twenty: they are infinitely more tractable than those of thirty.

I must revenge myself, however, by informing you of the effect of your fine reserve. It has only made me imagine the letter in question, that letter which breathes such a tender—only a hun-

dred times ~~more tender~~ than it probably is. Out of spite I take pleasure in conceiving it filled with soft expressions which cannot be in it; so that if I am not passionately admired, I shall make you suffer for it. After all, I cannot see with what face you can talk to me of the Italian post. You prove in your letter that I was not in the wrong to wait for it, but for not having waited long enough. Had I staid but one poor quarter of an hour longer, I should have met the packet, have laid hold of it first, and read it at my ease. It had then been my turn to make a merit of giving it you. But since the grapes are so sour, you may keep the letters. I have two others, which I would not change for them, were they better worth reading than I imagine they are. There is that of Harriet, I can assure you, even exceeds your own; nor have either you or I, in all our lives, ever wrote any thing so pretty. And yet you give yourself airs forsooth of treating this prodigy as a little impertinent. Upon my word, I suspect that to arise from mere envy; and, since I have discovered in her this new talent, I purpose, before you spoil her writings as you have done her speech, to establish between her apartment and mine an Italian post, from whence I will have no pilfering of packets.

Farewell, my dear friend, you will find enclosed the answers to your letters, which will

give you no mean idea of my interest here. I would write to you something about this country and its inhabitants; but it is high time to put an end to this volume of a letter. You have besides quite perplexed me with your strange fancies. As we have five or six days longer to stay here, and I shall have time to give another look at what I have already seen, you will be no loser by the delay; and you may depend on my transmitting you another volume as big as this, before my departure.

LETTER CLIII.

LORD B—— TO M. WOLMAR.

No! my dear Wolmar, you were not mistaken: St. Preux is to be depended on; but I am not; and I have paid dear for the experience that hath convinced me of it. Without his assistance I should have been a dupe to the very proof to which I put his fidelity. You know that, to satisfy his notions of gratitude, and divert his mind with new objects, I pretended that my journey to Italy was of greater importance than it really was. To bid a final adieu to the attachment of my youth, and bring back a friend perfectly cured of his, were the fruits I promised myself from the voyage. I informed you that his dream at Villeneuve gave me some uneasiness.

for him. That dream made me even suspect the motives of his transport, on being told that you had chosen him preceptor to your children, and that he should pass the remainder of his life with you. The better to observe the effusions of his heart, I had at first removed all difficulties, by declaring my intention of settling also in your part of the world; and thus I prevented any of those objections his friendship might have made on account of leaving me. A change in my resolutions, however, made me soon alter my tale.

He had not seen the Marchioness thrice, before we were both agreed in our opinion of her. Unfortunate woman! possessed of noble qualities, but without virtue! her ardent, sincere passion at first affected me, and nourished mine; but her passion was tinged with the blackness of her soul, and inspired me in the end with horror. When he had seen Laura, and knew her disposition, her beauty, her wit, and unexampled attachment, I formed a resolution to make use of her to acquire a perfect knowledge of the situation of St. Preux. If I marry Laura, said I to him, it is not my intention to carry her to London, where she may be known; but to a place, where virtue is respected in whomsoever it is found: you will there discharge your duty of preceptor, and we shall still continue to live together. If I do not marry her, it is time for me, however, to think of settling. You know my house in Oxfordshire,

and will make your choice, either to take upon you the education of M. Wolmar's children, or to accompany me in my retirement. To this he made me just such an answer as I expected; but I had a mind to observe his conduct. If, in order to spend his time at Clarens, he had promoted a marriage which he ought to have opposed, or, on the contrary, preferred the honour of his friend to his own happiness; in either case, I say, the experiment answered my end, and I knew what to think of the situation of his heart.

On trial, I found him to be such as I wished; firmly resolved against the project I pretended to have formed, and ready with all his arguments to oppose it; but I was continually in her company, and was moved by her tenderness and affection. My heart totally disengaged from the Marchioness, began to fix itself on her rival, by this constant intercourse. The sentiments of Laura increased the attachment she had before inspired; and I began to be ashamed of sacrificing to that prejudice I despised the esteem which I was so well convinced was due to her merit; I began even to be in doubt, whether I had not laid myself under some obligation to do that merit justice, by the hopes I had given her, if not in words, at least by my actions. Though I never promised her any thing, yet to have kept her in suspense and expectation for nothing would

be to deceive her; and I could not help thinking such a deception extremely cruel. In short, annexing a kind of duty to my inclination, and consulting happiness more than reputation, I attempted to reconcile my passion to reason, and resolved to carry my pretended scheme as far as it would go, and even to execute it in reality, if I could not recede without injustice. After some time, however, I began to be more uneasy on account of St. Preux, as he did not appear to act the part he had undertaken with that zeal I expected. Indeed he opposed my professed design of marriage, but took little pains to check my growing inclination; speaking to me of Laura in such a strain of encomium as, at the same time that he appeared to dissuade me from marrying her, added fuel to the flame, by increasing my affection. This inconsistency gave me some alarm: I did not think him so steady as before. He seemed shy of directly opposing my sentiments, gave way to my arguments, was fearful of giving offence, and indeed seemed to have lost all that intrepidity in doing his duty, which the true passion for it inspires. Some other observations which I made also increased my distrust. I found out that he visited Laura unknown to me; and that, by their frequent signs, there was a secret understanding between them. On her part, the prospect of being united to the man she loved seemed to give her no pleasure; I observed in

her the same degree of tenderness, indeed, but that tenderness was no longer mixed with joy at my approach; a gloomy sadness perpetually clouding her features. Nay, sometimes, in the tenderest part of our conversations, I have caught her casting a side glance on St. Preux, on which a tear would often steal silently down her cheek, which she endeavoured to conceal from me. In short, they carried the matter so far, that I was at last greatly perplexed. What could I think? It is impossible (said I to myself) that I can all this while have been cherishing a serpent in my bosom? How far have I not reason to extend my suspicions, and return those he formerly entertained of me? Weak and unhappy as we are, our misfortunes are generally of our own seeking! Why do we complain that bad men torment us, while the good are so ingenious at tormenting each other! All this operated but to induce me to come to a determination. For, though I was ignorant of the bottom of their intrigue, I saw the heart of Laura was still the same; and that proof of her affection endeared her to me the more. I proposed to come to an explanation with her before I put an end to the affair; but I was desirous of putting it off till the last moment, in order to get all the light I could possibly before hand. As for St. Preux, I was resolved to convince myself, to convince him, and, in short, to come at the truth of the matter,

before I took any step in regard to him, for it was easy to suppose that an infallible rupture must happen, and I was unwilling to place a good disposition, and a reputation of twenty years standing, in the balance against mere suspicions.

The Marchioness was not ignorant of what passed; having her spies in the convent where Laura resides, who informed her of the report of her marriage. Nothing more was necessary to excite her rage. She wrote me threatening letters; nay, she went farther; but, as it was not the first time she had done so, and we were on our guard, her attempts were fruitless. I had only the pleasure to see that our friend did not spare himself on this occasion; nor make any scruple to expose his own life to save that of his friend.

Overcome by the transports of her passion, the Marchioness fell sick, and was soon past recovery; putting at once an end to her misfortunes and her guilt*. I could not help being afflicted to hear of her illness, and sent Doctor Elwin to give her all the assistance in his power, as a physician. St. Preux went also to visit her in my behalf; but she would see neither one nor the other. She would not even bear to hear me named during her

* By a letter not published in this collection, it appears that Lord B—— was of opinion, that the souls of the wicked are annihilated in death.

illness, and inveighed against me with the most horrid imprecations every time I was mentioned. I was grieved at heart for her situation, and felt my wounds ready to bleed afresh; reason, however, supported my spirits and resolution, but I should have been one of the worst of men to think of marriage, while a woman so dear to me lay in that extremity. In the mean time, our friend, fearing I should not be able to resist the strong inclination I had to see her, proposed a journey to Naples; to which I consented.

The second day after our arrival there, he came into my chamber with a fixed and grave countenance, holding a letter in his hand, which he seemed to have just received. I started up, and cried out, "The Marchioness is dead!"—"Would to God (said he coldly) she were! it were better not to exist, than to exist only to do evil; but it is not of her I bring you news, though what I bring concerns you nearly: be pleased, my lord, to give me an uninterrupted hearing." I was silent, and thus he began:—

"In honouring me with the sacred name of friend, you taught me how to deserve it. I have acquitted myself of the charge you intrusted with me, and seeing you ready to forget yourself, have ventured to assist your memory. I saw you unable to break one connexion but by entering into another; both equally unworthy of you. Had an unequal marriage been the only point in ques-

tion, I should only have reminded you, that you was a peer of England, and advised you either to renounce all pretensions to public honour, or to respect public opinion. But a marriage so scandalous! can you? no, my lord, you will not make so unworthy a choice. It is not enough that your wife should be virtuous, her reputation should be unstained.—Believe me, a wife for Lord B—— is not easily to be found. Read that, my lord, and see what I have done.”

He then gave me a Letter. It was from Laura. I opened it with emotion, and read as follows :

“ My Lord,

“ LOVE at length prevailed, and you were
“ willing to marry me: but I am content. Your
“ friend has pointed out my duty, and I perform
“ it without regret: In dishonouring you, I
“ should have lived unhappily; in leaving your
“ honour unstained, methinks I partake of it.
“ The sacrifice of my felicity to a duty so severe,
“ makes me forget even the shame of my youth.
“ Farewell! from this moment I am no longer
“ in your power or my own. Farewell, my
“ lord, for ever! pursue me not in my retreat
“ to despair; but hear my last request: Confer
“ not on any other woman that honour I would
“ not accept. There was but one heart in the
“ world made for yours; and it was that of

“ LAURA.”

The agitation of mind I was in, on reading this letter, prevented me from speaking. He took the advantage of my silence, to tell me that after my departure she had taken the veil in the convent where she boarded; that the court of Rome being informed she was going to be married to a Lutheran, had given orders to prevent his seeing her; and confessed to me frankly, that he had taken all these measures in concert with herself. "I did not oppose your designs (continued he) with all the power I might; fearing your return to the Marchioness, and being desirous of combating your old passion by that which you entertained for Laura. In seeing you run greater lengths than I intended, I applied to your understanding: but having, from my own experience, but too just reason to distrust the power of argument, I sounded the heart of Laura; and finding in it all that generosity which is inseparable from true love, I prevailed on her to make this sacrifice. The assurance of being no longer the object of your contempt, inspired her with a fortitude which renders her the more worthy of your esteem. She has done her duty, you must now do yours."

Then eagerly embracing and pressing me to his heart, "I read (says he) in our common destiny those laws which Heaven dictates to both, and requires us to obey. The empire of love is at an

end, and that of friendship begins : my heart attends only to its sacred call ; it knows no other tie than that which unites me to you. Fix on whatever place of residence you please, Clarens, Oxford, London, Paris, or Rome ; it is equal to me, so we but live together. Go whither you will, seek an asylum wherever you think fit, I will follow you throughout the world : for I solemnly protest in the face of the living God, that I will never leave you till death."

I was greatly affected at the zeal and affection of this young man ; his eyes sparkling with pleasure on this effusion of his heart. I forgot at once both the Marchioness and Laura. Is there, indeed, any thing in the world to be regretted, while one preserves so dear a friend ? Indeed, I was now fully convinced, by the part he so readily took on this occasion, that he was entirely cured of his ancient passion : and that the pains you had taken were not thrown away upon him. In short, I could not doubt, by the solemn engagement he had thus voluntarily made, that his attachment to me was truly sincere ; and that his virtue had entirely got the better of his inclinations. I can therefore bring him back with confidence. Yes, my dear Wolmar, he is worthy to educate youth ; and what is more, of being received into your house.

A few days after, I received an account of the death of the Marchioness, at which I was but

little affected, as she had indeed been long dead in respect to me. I had hitherto regarded marriage as a debt, which every man contracts at the time of his birth with his country and mankind; for which reason, I had resolved to marry, the less out of inclination than duty; but I am now of another opinion. The obligation to marriage, I now conceive, is not so universal, but that it depends on the rank and situation which every man holds in life. Celibacy is, doubtless, wrong in the common people, such as manufacturers, husbandmen, and others, who are really useful and necessary to the state. But for those superior orders of men, who compose the legislature and the magistracy, to which every other aspires, and which are always sufficiently supplied, it is both lawful and expedient. For, were the rich all obliged to marry, the increase of number among those subjects, which are a dead weight on the state, would only tend to its depopulation. Mankind will always find masters enough, and England will sooner want labourers than peers.

I think myself at full liberty, therefore, in the rank to which I was born, to indulge my own inclination in this respect. At my age, it is too late to think of repairing the shocks my heart hath sustained from love. I shall devote my future hours, therefore, to friendship, the pleasures of which I can no where cultivate so well as at

Clarens. I accept, therefore, your obliging offers, on such conditions as my fortune ought to add to yours, that it may not be useless to me. Besides, after the engagements St. Preux hath entered into, I know no other method of detaining him with you, but by residing with you myself; and if ever he grows tired or troublesome, it will be sufficient for me to leave you, to make him follow. The only embarrassment I shall in this case lie under respects my customary voyages to England; for though I have no longer any interest in the House of Peers, yet, while I am one of the number, I think it necessary I should continue to do my duty as such. But I have a faithful friend among my brother peers, whom I can empower to answer for me in ordinary cases; and on extraordinary occasions, wherein I think it my duty to go over in person, I can take my pupil along with me; and even he his pupils with him, when they grow a little bigger, and you can prevail on yourself to trust them with us. Such voyages cannot fail of being useful to them, and will not be so very long as to make their absence afflicting to their mother.

I have not shown this letter to St. Preux, nor do I desire you should show every part of it to the ladies; it is proper that my scheme to sound the heart of our friend should be known only to you and me. I would not have you conceal any thing from them, however, that may do honour

to this worthy youth, even though it should be discovered at my expence; but I must here take my leave.

I have sent the designs and drawings for my pavillion, for you to reform, alter, and amend, as you please; but I would have you to execute them immediately, if possible. I would have struck out the music room; for I have now lost almost all pretensions to taste, and am careless of amusement: at the request of St. Preux, however, I have left it, as he proposes now and then to exercise your children there. You will receive also some few books, to add to your library. But what novelty will you find in books? No, my dear Wolmar, you only want to understand that of nature, to be the wisest of men.

LETTER CLIV.

ANSWER.

I WAS impatient, my dear B——, to come to the end of your adventures. It seemed very strange to me, that, after having so long resisted the force of your inclinations, you had waited only for a friend to assist you to give way to them: though, to say truth, we find ourselves often more weak when supported by others, than when we rely solely on our own strength. I con-

self, however, I was greatly alarmed by your last letter, when you told me your marriage with Laura was a thing absolutely determined. Not but that, in spite of this assurance, I still entertained some doubts of the event; and if my suspicions had been disappointed, I would never have seen St. Preux again. As it is, you have both acted as I flattered myself you would, and have so fully justified the good opinion I had of you, that I shall be delighted whenever you think proper to return, and settle here, agreeably to the design we had planned. Come, ye uncommon friends! come to increase and partake of the happiness we here enjoy. However flattering may be the hopes of those who believe in a future state, for my part, I had rather enjoy the present in their company; nay, I perceive you are both more agreeable to me with the tenets you possess, than you would be if unhappy enough to think as I do.

As to St. Preux, you know what were my sentiments of him at your departure: there was no need to make any experiment on his heart to settle my judgment concerning him. My proof had been before made, and I thought I knew him as well as it was possible for one man to know another. I had, besides, more than one reason to place a confidence in him; and was more secure of him than he was of himself. For though he seems to have followed your example

in renouncing matrimony, you will perhaps find reason hereto prevail on him to change his system. But I will explain myself further on this head when I see you.

With respect to yourself, I think your sentiments on celibacy quite new and refined. They may, for aught I know, be judicious also, when applied to political institutions, intended to balance and keep in equilibrium, the relative powers of states; but I am in doubt, whether they are not more subtle than solid, when applied to dispense with the obligations that individuals lie under to the laws of nature. It seems to me that life is a blessing we receive on condition of transmitting it to our successors: a kind of tenure which ought to pass from generation to generation; and that every one who had a father is indispensibly obliged to become one. Such has been hitherto your opinion also; it was one of your motives for going to Italy: but I know from whence you derive your new system of philosophy; there is an argument in Laura's letter, which your heart knows not how to invalidate.

Our sprightly cousin has been for these eight or ten days past at Geneva, with her relations, on family affairs; but we daily expect her to return: I have told my wife as much as was expedient she should know of your letter. We had learnt of

Mr. Miel, that your marriage was broken off; but she was ignorant of the part St. Preux had in that event: and you may be assured it will give her great pleasure to be informed of all he has done to merit your beneficence, and justify your esteem. I have shown her the plan and designs for your pavillion, in which she thinks there is much taste. We propose to make some little alterations, however, as the ground requires; which, as they will make your lodging the more convenient, we doubt not you will approve.

We wait, nevertheless, for the sanction of Clara, before we resolve; for without her, you know there would be nothing to be done here. In the mean time, I have set the people to work, and hope to have the masonry pretty forward before winter.

I am obliged to you for your books; but I no longer read those I am master of, and it is too late in life for me to begin to study those I do not understand. I am, however, not quite so ignorant as you would make me. The only volume of nature's works which I read, is the heart of man; of my abilities for comprehending which my friendship for you is a sufficient proof.

LETTER CLV.

MRS. ORBE TO MRS. WOLMAR.

My stay here, my dear cousin, gives me a world of anxieties ; the worst of all which is, that the agreeableness of the place would induce me to stay longer. The city is delightful, its inhabitants hospitable, and their manners courteous ; while liberty, which I love of all things, seems to have taken refuge amongst them. The more I know of this little state, the more I find an attachment to one's country agreeable ; and pity those, who, pretending to call themselves of this or that country, have no attachment to any. For my part, I perceive, that, if I had been born in this, I should have had truly a Roman soul. As it is, I dare not, however, pretend to say that,

Rome is no more at Rome, but where I dwell.

For I am afraid you will be malicious enough to think the contrary. But why need we talk always about Rome, and Rome ? the subject of this letter shall be Geneva. I shall say nothing about the face of the country ; it is much like ours, except that it is less mountainous, and more rural. I shall also say nothing about the government ; my good father will, doubtless, give you enough of it ; as he is employed here all day long, in the

fullness of his heart, talking politics with the magistrates : and I found him not a little mortified that the Gazette so seldom makes mention of Geneva. You may judge of the tediousness of their conversation, by the length of my letters; for, when I am wearied with their discourse, I leave them, and, in order to divert myself, am tiresome to you. All I remember of their long conferences is, that they hold in high esteem the great good sense which prevails in this city. When we regard, indeed, the mutual action and re-action of all parts of the state, which afford a reciprocal balance to each other, it is not to be doubted that there are greater abilities employed in the government of this little republic than in that of some great kingdoms, where every thing supports itself by its own proper strength ; and the reins of administration may be thrown into the hands of a blockhead, without any danger to the constitution. I can assure you, this is not the case here. I never hear any body talk to my father about the famous ministers of great courts, without thinking of the wretched musician, who thundered away upon our great organ at Lausanne, and thought himself a prodigious able hand, because he made a great noise. The people here have only a little spinnet, but in general they make good harmony, though the instrument be now and then a little out of tune.

Neither shall I say any thing about—but

with telling you what I shall not say, I shall never have done. To begin then with something, that I may sooner come to a conclusion. Of all people in the world those of Geneva are the most easily known and characterised. Their manners, and even their vices, are mixed with a certain frankness peculiar to themselves. They are conscious of their natural goodness of heart, and that makes them not afraid to appear such as they are. They have generosity, sense, and penetration; but they are apt to love money too well; a fault which I attribute to their situation and circumstances, which make it so necessary; the territory of this state not producing a sufficient nourishment for its inhabitants. Hence it happens that the natives of Geneva, who are scattered up and down Europe to make their fortunes, copy the airs of foreigners; and having adopted the vices of the countries where they have lived, bring them home in triumph with their wealth*. Thus the luxury of other nations makes them despise the simplicity of their own; its spirit and liberty appear ignoble, and they forge themselves chains of gold, not as marks of slavery, but as ornaments of pride.

* At present they do not take the trouble to seek the vices of foreigners: the latter are ready enough to bring them.

But what have I to do with these confounded politics? Indeed here I am stunned with them, and have them constantly rung in my ears. I hear nothing else talked of; unless when my father is absent, which never happens except when the post arrives. It is ourselves, my dear, nevertheless, that infect every place we go to; for, as to the conversation of the people, it is generally useful and agreeable; indeed, there is little to be learned even from books, which may not here be acquired by conversation. The manners of the English have reached as far as this country; and the men, living more separate from the women than in ours, contract among themselves a graver turn, and have more solidity in their discourse. This advantage is attended, nevertheless, with an inconvenience that is very soon experienced. They are extremely prolix, formal, sententious, and argumentative. Instead of writing like Frenchmen, as they speak, they, on the contrary, speak as they write. They declaim instead of talking; and one thinks they are always going to support a thesis. They divide their discourse into chapters and sections, and take the same method in their conversation as they do in their books. They speak as if they were reading, strictly observing etymological distinctions, and pronouncing their words exactly as they are spelt: in short, their conversations consist of

harangues, and they prattle as if they were preaching.

But what is the most singular is, that, with this dogmatical and frigid air in their discourse, they are lively, impetuous, and betray strong passions; nay, they would express themselves well enough upon sentimental subjects, if they were not too particular in words, or knew how to address the heart. But their periods and their commas are insupportable; and they describe so composedly the most violent passions, that, when they have done, one looks about one, to see who is affected.

In the mean time, I must confess I am bribed a little to think well of their hearts, and to think they are not altogether void of taste. For you must know as a secret, that a very pretty gentleman for a husband, and, as they say, very rich, hath honoured me with his regards; and I have more gratitude and politeness than to call in question what he has told me. Had he but come eighteen months sooner, what pleasure should I have taken in having a sovereign for my slave, and in turning the head of a noble lord! but at present mine is not clear enough to make that sport agreeable.

But to return to that taste for reading which makes the people of Geneva think. It extends to all ranks and degrees amongst them, and is of advantage to all. The French read a great de^{ers}

but they read only new books ; or rather they run them over, less for the sake of knowing what they contain, than to have it to say they have read them. On the contrary, the readers at Geneva peruse only books of merit ; they read, and digest what they read ; making it their business to understand, not to criticise upon them. Criticisms and the choice of books are made at Paris ; while choice books are almost the only ones that are read at Geneva. By this means, their reading has less variety, and is more profitable. The women, on their part, employ a good deal of their time also in reading* ; and their conversation is affected by it, but in a different manner. The fine ladies are affected, and set up for wits here, as well as with us. Nay, the petty citizens themselves learn from their books a kind of methodical chit-chat, a choice of words which one is surpris'd to hear from them, as we are sometimes with a prattle of forward children. They must unite all the good sense of the men, all the sprightliness of the women, and all the wit common to both ; or the former will appear a little pedantic, and the latter prudish.

As I was looking out of my window yesterday, I overheard two tradesmen's daughters, both

* It is to be remembered that these letters were written some years ago ; a circumstance, I am afraid, that will be often suggested to the reader.

very pretty, talking together in a manner sprightly enough to attract my attention. I listened, and heard one of them propose to the other, laughing, to write a journal of their transactions. "Yes (replied the other, immediately), a journal of a morning, and a comment at night." What say you, cousin? I know not if this be the style of tradesmen's daughter's; but I know one must be taken up greatly, indeed, not to be able, during the whole day, to make more than a comment on what has passed. I fancy this lady had read the *Arabian Nights Entertainments*.

Thus, with a style a little elevated, the women of Geneva are lively and satirical; and one sees here the effect of the nobler passions, as much as in any city in the world. Even in the simplicity of their dress there is taste; they are graceful also in their manners, and agreeable in conversation. As the men are less gallant than affectionate, the women are less coquettish than tender; their susceptibility gives, even to the most virtuous among them, an agreeable and refined turn, which reaches the heart, and thence deduces all its refinement. So long as the ladies of Geneva preserve their own manners, they will be the most amiable women in Europe; but they are in danger of being soon all Frenchified, and then Frenchwomen will be more agreeable than they.

Thus every thing goes to ruin, when manners

grow corrupted. Even taste depends on morals, and disappears with them; giving way to affected and pompous pretensions, that have no other foundation than fashion. True wit also lies nearly under the same circumstances. Is it not the modesty of our sex that obliges us to make use of address to resist the arts of men: and, if they are reduced to make use of artifice to excite our attention, have we less occasion for ingenuity to seem not to understand them? Is it not the men who set our tongues and wits at liberty; who make us so keen at repartee, and oblige us to turn their persons and pretensions into ridicule? You may say what you will, but I maintain it, that a certain coquettish air and malicious raillery confounds a gallant much more than silence or contempt. What pleasure have I not taken in seeing a discontented Celadon blush, stammer, and lose himself at every word; while the shafts of ridicule, less flaming, but more pointed than those of love, flew about him like hail? in seeing him shot through and through with icicles, whose coldness added to the smart of the wounds! Even you yourself, who never loved to give pain, do you believe your mild and ingenuous behaviour, your timid, gentle looks conceal less rancour and art than my hoydening? Upon my word, my dear, I much doubt, with all your hypocritical airs, if an account were taken of all the lovers you and I have made fools of, whether yours

would not be the longer list. I cannot help laughing every time I think of that poor Confians, who came to me in such a passion, to re-preach you with having too great a regard for him. "She is so obliging to me (says he) that I know not what to complain of, and declines my pretensions with so much good sense, that I am ashamed of finding myself unable to reply to her arguments; in short, she is so much my friend, that I find myself incapable of supporting the character of her lover."

But to return to my subject. I believe there is no place in the world where married people agree better, and are better managers, than in this city: here a domestic life is peaceful and agreeable; the husbands are in general obliging, and the wives almost Etoifas. Here your system really exists. The two sexes employ and amuse themselves so differently, that they are never tired with each other's customs and company, but meet again with redoubled pleasure. This heightens the enjoyment of the wife; abstinence from what we delight in is a tenet of your philosophy; it is, indeed, the epicureism of reason.

But, unhappily, this ancient modesty begins a little to decline. The sexes begin to associate more frequently, they approach in person, and their hearts recede. It is here as with us, every thing is a mixture of good and bad, but in dif-

ferent proportions. The virtues of the natives of this country are of its own production; their vices are exotic. They are great travellers, and easily adopt the customs and manners of other nations; they speak other languages with facility, and learn without difficulty their proper accent, nevertheless, they have a disagreeable drawling tone in the pronunciation of their own, particularly among the women, who travel but little. More humbled by their insignificance, than proud of their liberty, they seem among foreigners to be ashamed of their country, and are therefore, in a hurry, as one may say, to naturalize themselves in that where they happen to reside; and perhaps the character they have of being avaricious and selfish, contributes not a little to this false shame. It would be better, without doubt, to wipe off the stain by a disinterested example, than to scandalize their fellow-citizens by being ashamed of their country. But they despise the place of their nativity, even while they render it estimable, and are still more in the wrong not to give their city the honour of their own personal merit.

And yet, however avaricious they may be, they are not accused of amassing fortunes by low and servile means: they seldom attach themselves to the great, or dance attendance at courts; personal slavery being as odious to them as that of the community. Pliant and flexible as Alcibia-

des, they are equally impatient of servitude ; and though they adopt the customs of other nations, they imitate the people without being slaves to the prince. They are chiefly employed in trade, because that is the surest road to wealth, consistent with liberty.

And this great object of their wishes makes them often bury the talents with which they are prodigally endowed by nature. This brings me back to the beginning of my letter. They have ingenuity and courage, are lively and penetrating, nor is there any thing virtuous or great which surpasses their comprehension and abilities. But, more passionately fond of money than of honour, in order to live in abundance, they die in obscurity, and the only example they leave to their children is the love of those treasures which for their sakes they have amassed.

I learn all this from the natives themselves ; for they speak of their own characters very impartially.

For my part, I know not what they may be abroad, but at home they are an agreeable people : and I know but one way to quit Geneva without regret. Do you know, cousin, what this is ? You may affect as much ignorance and humility as you please ; if you should say you have not already guessed, you certainly would tell a fib. The day after to-morrow our jovial company will embark in a pretty little ship, fitted

out for the occasion ; for we choose to return by water, on account of the pleasantness of the season, and that we may be altogether. We purpose to pass the first night at Morges, to be the next day at Lausanne, on account of the marriage ceremony, and the day following to be at — you know where. When you see at a distance the flags flying, the torches flaming, and hear the cannon roar ; I charge you scud about the house like a mad thing, and call the whole family to arms ! to arms ! the enemy ! the enemy is coming !

P. S.—Although the distribution of the apartments incontestibly belongs to me as housekeeper, I will give it up to you on this occasion, insisting only that my father be placed in those of Lord B——, on account of his charts and maps ; with which I desire it may be completely hung from the ceiling to the floor.

LETTER CLVI.

FROM MRS. WOLMAR.

How delightful are my sensations in beginning this letter ! It is the first time in my life that I ever wrote to you without fear or shame ! I am proud of the friendship which now subsists between us, as it is the fruit of an unparalleled con-

left over a fatal passion—a passion which may sometimes be overcome, but is very rarely refined to friendship. To relinquish that which was once dear to us when honour requires it may be effected by the efforts of ordinary minds; but to have been what we once were to each other, and to become what we now are, this is a triumph and a deed. The motive for ceasing to love may possibly be a vicious one; but that which converts the most tender passion into a sincere friendship cannot be equivocal: it must be virtuous. It should we ever have arrived at this of ourselves? Never, never, my good friend; it had been rashness to attempt it. To avoid each other was the first article of our duty, and which nothing should have prevented us from performing. We might without doubt have continued our mutual esteem; but we must have ceased to write, or to converse. All thoughts of each other must have been suppressed, and the greatest regard we could have reciprocally shown had been to break off all correspondence.

Instead of that, let us consider our present situation: can there be on earth a more agreeable situation, and do we not reap a thousand times a day the reward of our self-denial! To see, to love each other, to be sensible of our bliss, to pass our days together in a fraternal intimacy and peace—innocence; to think of each other without remorse; to speak without blushing; to do ho-

nour to that attachment for which we have been so often reproached; this is the point at which we are at last arrived. O my friend! how far in the career of honour have we already run! let us resolve to persevere, and finish our race as we have begun.

To whom are we indebted for such extraordinary happiness? You cannot be ignorant: you know it well. I have seen your susceptible heart overflow with gratitude at the goodness of the best of men, to whom both you and I have been so greatly obliged: a goodness that does not lay us under fresh obligations, but only renders those more dear which were before sacred. The only way to acknowledge his favours is to merit them; for the only value he sets on them consists in their emolument to us. Let us then reward our benefactor by our virtue; for this is all he requires, and, therefore, all we owe him. He will be satisfied with us and with himself, in having restored us to our reason.

But permit me to lay before you a picture of your future situation, that you may yourself examine it, and see if there be any thing in it to make you apprehensive of danger: yes, worthy youth, if you respect the cause of virtue, attend with a chaste ear to the counsels of your friend. I tremble to enter upon a subject in which I am sorry to engage; but how shall I be silent without betraying my friend? Will it not be too safe:

to warn you of the danger when you are already entangled in the snare? Yes, my friend, I am the only person in the world who is intimate enough with you to present it to your view. Have I not a right to talk to you as a sister, as a mother?

Your career, you tell me, is finished; if so, its end is premature. Though your first passion be extinguished, your sensibility still remains; and your heart is the more to be suspected, as its only cause of restraint no longer exists. A young man of great ardour and susceptibility resolves to live continent and chaste; he knows, he feels, he has a thousand times said, that fortitude of mind, which is productive of every virtue, depends on the purity of sentiment which supports it. As love preserved him from vice in his youth, his good sense must secure him in manhood; however severe may be the duty enjoined him, he knows there is a pleasure arising from it, that will compensate its rigour; and, though it be necessary to enter the conflict when conquest is in view, can he do less now out of piety to God than he did before out of regard to a mistress? Such, I imagine, is your way of reasoning, and such the maxims you adopt for your future conduct: for you have always despised those persons, who, content with outward appearances, have one doctrine for theory and another for practice, and who lay upon others a burden of moral

duties which they themselves are unwilling to bear.

But, what kind of life has such a prudent virtuous man made choice of, in order to comply with those rules he has prescribed? Less a philosopher than a man of probity and a Christian, he has not surely taken his vanity for a guide: he certainly knows that it is much easier to avoid temptations, than to withstand them; does he, therefore, avoid all dangerous opportunities? Does he shun those objects which are most likely to move his passions? Has he that humble diffidence of himself which is the best security to virtue? Quite the contrary; he does not hesitate rashly to rush on danger. At thirty years of age, he is going to seclude himself from the world, in company with women of his own age; one of whom was once too dear to him for him ever to banish the dangerous idea of their former intimacy from his mind; another of whom has lived with him in great familiarity, and a third is attached to him by all those ties which obligations conferred excite in grateful minds. He is going to expose himself to every thing that can renew those passions which are but imperfectly extinguished; he is going to entangle himself in those snares, which he ought, of all others, to avoid. There is not one circumstance attending his situation which ought not to make him distrust his own strength, nor one which will not render

him for ever contemptible, should he be weak enough to be off his guard for a moment. Where then is that great fortitude of mind, in which he presumes to place such confidence? In what instance has it hitherto appeared that he can be answerable for it, for the future; did he acquire it at Paris, in the house of the colonel's lady? or was he influenced by it last summer at Meillerie? has it been his security during the winter against the charms of another object, or this spring against the terrifying apprehensions of a dream? By the slender assistance it once afforded him, is there any reason to suppose it will always bring him off victorious? He may know, when his duty requires, how to combat the passions of a friend? but will he be as capable of combating his own? Alas! let him learn from the best half of his life to think modestly of the other.

A state of violence and constraint may be supported for a while. Six months, for instance, a year, is nothing: fix any certain time, and we may presume to hold out. But when that state is to last as long as we live, where is the fortitude that can support itself under it? Who can sustain a constant state of self-denial? O my friend! a life of pleasure is short, but a life of virtue is exceeding long. We must be incessantly on our guard. The instant of enjoyment is soon past, and never more returns; that of doing evil passes

away too ; but as constantly returns, and is ever present. Forget ourselves for a moment, and we are undone ! Is it in such a state of danger and trial that our days can pass away in happiness and tranquillity ? or is it for such as have once escaped the danger to expose themselves again to like hazards ? What future occasions may not arise, as hazardous as those you have escaped, and, what is worse, equally unforeseen ? Do you think the monuments of danger exist only in Meillerie ? they are in every place where we are ; we carry them about with us : yes, you know too well that a susceptible mind interests the whole universe in its passion, and that every object here will excite our former ideas, and remind us of our former sensations.

I believe, however, I am presumptuous enough to believe, that will never happen to me ; and my heart is ready enough to answer for yours. But, though it may be above meanness, is that easy heart of yours above weakness ? and am I the only person here it will cost you pains to *respect* ? Forget not, St. Preux, that all who are near to me are entitled to be respected as myself ; reflect that you are continually to bear the innocent play of an amiable woman ; think of the eternal disgrace you will deservedly fall into, if your heart should go astray for a moment, and you should harbour any designs on her you have so much reason to honour.

I would have your duty, your word, and your ancient friendship restrain you; the obstacles which virtue throws in your way may serve to discourage idle hopes; and, by the help of your reason, you may suppress your fruitless wishes; but would you thence be freed from the influence of sense, and the snares of imagination? Obligated to respect us both, and to forget our sex, you will be liable to temptation from our servants, and might perhaps think yourself justified by the condescension: but would you be in reality less culpable? or can the difference of rank change the nature of a crime? On the contrary, you would debase yourself the more, as the means you might employ would be more ignoble. But is it possible that you should be guilty of such means! No, perish the base man, who would bargain for a heart, and make love a mercenary passion! Such men are the cause of all the crimes which are committed by debauchery: for she who is once bought will be ever after to be sold: and, amidst the shame into which she is inevitably plunged, who may most properly be said to be the author of her misery, the brutal wretch who insults her in a brothel, or her seducer, who showed her the way thither, by first paying a price for her favours?

I will add another consideration, which, if I am not mistaken, will affect you. You have been

witness of the pains I have taken to establish order and decency in my family. Tranquillity and modesty, happiness and innocence, prevail throughout the whole. Think, my friend, of yourself, of me, of what we were, of what we are, and what we ought to be. Shall I have it one day to say, in regretting my lost labour, It is to you I owe the disorder of my house?

Let us, if it be necessary, go farther, and sacrifice even modesty to a true regard for virtue. Man is not made for a life of celibacy, and it is very difficult, in a state so contrary to that of nature, not to fall into some public or private irregularity. For how shall a man be always on his guard against an intestine enemy? Look upon the rash votaries of other countries, who enter into a solemn vow not to be men. To punish them for their presumption, Heaven abandons them to their own weakness: they call themselves saints, for entering into engagements which necessarily make them sinners; their continence is only pretended, and, for affecting to set themselves above the duties of humanity, they debase themselves below it. It is easy to stand upon punctilio, and affect a nice observance of laws which are kept only in appearance*; but a truly virtuous man

* Some men are continent without having any merit in it, others are so through virtue, and I doubt not there are many Romish priests in the latter situation; but to impose a state of celibacy on so numerous a body of

cannot but perceive that his essential duties are sufficient, without extending them to works of supererogation.

It is, my dear St. Preux, the true humility of a Christian always to think his duty too much for his strength: apply this rule, and you will be sensible that a situation which might only alarm another man ought to make you tremble. The less you are afraid, the more reason you have to fear, and if you are not in some degree deterred by the severity of your duty, you can have little hopes of being able to discharge it.

Such are the perils that threaten you here: I know that you will never deliberately venture to do ill; and the only evils you have cause to apprehend are those which you cannot foresee. I do not, however, bid you draw your conclusions solely from my reasoning: but recommend it to your mature consideration. If you can answer me in a manner satisfactory to yourself, I shall be satisfied; if you can rely upon yourself, I too shall rely upon you. Tell me that you have overcome all the foibles of humanity, that you are an angel, and I will receive you with open arms.

men as the clergy of that church, it is not to bid them abstain from women, but to be content with the wives of other men. I am really surprised that, in countries where morals are held in any esteem, the legislature should tolerate such scandalous engagements.

But, is it possible for you, whilst a man, to lead a life of continual self-denial and mortification? to have almost the most severe duties to perform? to be constantly on your guard with those whom you so sincerely love? No; no, my amiable friend, happy is he who in this life can make one single sacrifice to virtue. I have one in view, worthy of a man who has struggled and suffered in its cause. If I do not presume too far, the happiness I have ventured to design for you will repay every obligation of my heart, and be even greater than you would have enjoyed, had Providence favoured our first inclinations. As I cannot make you an angel myself, I would unite you to one who would be the guardian of your heart, who will refine it, re-animate it to virtue, and under whose auspices you may securely live with us in this peaceful retreat of angelic innocence. You will not, I conceive, be under much difficulty to guess who it is I mean, as it is an object which has already got footing in the heart, which it will one day entirely possess, if my project succeeds.

I foresee all the difficulties attending it, without being discouraged, as the design is virtuous. I know the influence I have over my fair friend, and think I shall not abuse it by exerting my power in your favour. But you are acquainted with her resolutions, and before I attempt to alter them, I ought to be well assured of your

ments, that while I am endeavouring to
 ail on her to permit your addressee, I may be
 to answer for your love and gratitude: for,
 the inequality which fortune has made between
 deprives you of the privilege of making such
 oposal yourself, it is still more improper that
 privilege should be granted before we know
 you will receive it. I am not unacquainted
 your delicacy, and know, that if you have
 objections to make, they will respect her
 er than yourself. But, banish your idle scru-
 . Do you think you can be more tenacious
 y friend's reputation than I am? No; how-
 r dear you are to me, you need not be appre-
 sive lest I should prefer your interest to her
 our. But as I value the esteem of people of
 le, so I despise the prejudices and inconsiderate
 fures of the multitude; who are ever led by
 false glare of things, and are strangers to real
 tue. Were the difference in point of fortune
 ween you a hundred times greater than it is,
 ere is no rank in life to which great talents
 d good behaviour have not a right to aspire:
 d what pretensions can a woman have to dis-
 n to make that man her husband whom she is
 ould to number among her friends? You know
 e sentiments of us both in these matters. A
 se modesty and the fear of censure, lead to

more bad actions than good ones; for virtue never blushes at any thing but vice.

As to yourself, that pride which I have sometimes remarked in you cannot be exerted with greater impropriety than on this occasion; and it would be a kind of ingratitude in you to receive from her, reluctantly one favour more.— Besides, however nice and difficult you may be in this point, you must own it is more agreeable, and has a much better look, for a man to be indebted for his fortune to his wife than to a friend; as he becomes the protector of the one; and is protected by the other; and as nothing can be more true than that a virtuous man cannot have a better friend than his wife.

If, after all, there remain in the bottom of your heart any repugnance to enter into new love engagements, you cannot too speedily suppress them, both for your own honour and my repose: for I shall never be satisfied with either you or myself till you really become what you ought to be, and take pleasure in what your duty requires. Ought not I, my friend, to be less apprehensive of such a repugnance to new engagements than of inclinations too relative to the old? What have I not done with regard to you to discharge my duty? I have even exceeded my promises. Do I not even give you an Eloisa? Will you not possess the better half of myself, and be still dearer to the other? With what pleasure shall I not

indulge myself, after such a connexion, in my attachment to you ! Yes, accomplish to her those vows you made me, and let your heart fulfil with her all our former engagements. May it, if possible, give to her's all it owes to mine. O, St. Preux ! to her I transfer the ancient debt. Remember it is not to be easily discharged.

Such, my friend, is the scheme I have projected to re-unite you to us without danger, in giving you the same place in our family which you already held in our hearts ; attached by the most dear and sacred connexions, we shall live together sisters and brothers ; you no longer your own enemy nor ours. The warmest sentiments, when legitimate, are not dangerous. When we are no longer under the necessity of suppressing them, they cannot excite our apprehensions. So far, indeed, from endeavouring to suppress sentiments so innocent and delightful, we should make them at once both our pleasure and our duty. We should then love each other with the purest affection, and should enjoy the united charms of friendship, love, and innocence. And if in executing the charge you have taken upon yourself, Heaven should recompense the care you take of our children, by blessing you with children of your own, you will then know from experience how to estimate the service you have done us. Endowed with the greatest blessings of which human nature

is capable, you will learn to support with pleasure the agreeable burden of a life useful to your friends and relations; you will, in short, perceive to be true what the vain philosophy of the vicious could never believe, that happiness is, even in this world, the reward of the virtuous.

Reflect at leisure on my proposal; not, however, to determine whether it suits you; I require not your answer on that point; but whether it is proper for Mrs. Orbe, and whether you can make her as happy as she ought to make you.— You know in what manner she has discharged her duty in every station of her sex. Judge by what she is, what she has a right to expect. She is as capable of love as Eloisa, and should be loved in the same degree. If you think you can deserve her, speak; my friendship will try to effect such an union, and, from her's, flatters itself with success. But, if my hopes are deceived in you, you are at least a man of honour and probity, and are not unacquainted with her delicacy; you would not covet happiness at the expence of her felicity: let your heart be worthy of her, or let the offer of it never be made.

Once more, I say, consult your own heart; consider well of your answer before you send it. In matters relative to the happiness of one's whole life, common prudence will not permit us to determine without great deliberation: but, in an affair where our whole soul, our happiness, both

here and hereafter, is at stake, even to deliberate lightly would be a crime. Call to your aid, therefore, my good friend, all the dictates of true wisdom; nor will I be ashamed to put you in mind of those which are most essential. You do not want religion: I am afraid, however, you do not draw from it all the advantages which your conduct might receive from its precepts: but that your philosophical pride elevates you above true Christian simplicity: in particular, your notions of prayer are by no means consistent with mine. In your opinion, that act of humiliation is of no use to us. God having implanted in every man's conscience all that is necessary to direct him aright, has afterwards left him to himself, a free agent to act as he pleases. But you well know this is not the doctrine of St. Paul, nor that which is professed in our church. We are free agents, it is true, but we are by nature ignorant, weak, and prone to evil: of whom then shall we acquire strength and knowledge, but of the source of all power and wisdom? and how shall we obtain them, if we are not humble enough to ask? Take care, my friend, that to the sublime ideas you entertain of the Supreme Being, human pride doth not annex the abject notions which belong only to man. Can you think the Deity wants such arts as are necessary to human understanding, or that he lies under the necessity of ge-

neralising his ideas, to comprehend them the more readily? According to your notions of things, Providence would be under an embarrassment to take care of individuals. You seem to be afraid that a constant attention to a diversity of objects must perplex and fatigue infinite wisdom, than to think that it can act better by general than partial laws; doubtless because this seems easier for the Almighty. The Deity is highly obliged to such great philosophers for furnishing him with convenient means of action, to ease him of his labour. But why should we ask any thing of him? say you:—is he not acquainted with our wants? Is he not a father that provides for his children? Do we know better than he what is needful for us? or are we more desirous of happiness than he is that we should be happy?

This, my dear St. Preux, is all sophistry. The greatest of our wants, even the only one we have no remedy for, is that of being insensible of them; and the first step to relief is the knowledge of our necessities. To be wise we must be humble; in the sensibility of our weakness we become strong. Thus, justice is united to clemency; thus grace and liberty triumph together.

Slaves by our weakness, we are set free by prayer; for it depends on us to seek and obtain favour; but the power to do this depends not on ourselves.

Learn, then, not always to depend on your own sagacity on difficult occasions ; but on that Being whose omnipotence is equal to his wisdom, and who knows how to direct us in every thing right. The greatest defect in human wisdom, even in that which has only virtue for its object, is a too great confidence, which makes us judge by the present of the future, and of our whole lives from the experience of a single moment. We perceive ourselves resolute one instant, and, therefore, conclude we shall always be so. Puffed up with that pride, which is, nevertheless, mortified by daily experience, we think we are under no danger of falling into a snare which we have once escaped. The modest language of true fortitude is, *I had resolution, it is true, on this or that occasion* ; but he who boasts of his present security, knows not how weak he may prove on the next trial ; and relying on his borrowed strength as if it were his own, deserves to feel the want of it when it stands in most need of assistance. How vain are all our projects, how absurd our reasonings, in the eyes of that Being who is not confined to time or space ! Man is so weak as to disregard things which are placed at a distance from him : he sees only the objects which immediately surround him ; changes his notions of things as the point of sight is changed from whence he views them. We judge of the future from what agrees with us now, without knowing how far

that which pleases to-day, may be disagreeable to-morrow; we depend on ourselves, as if we were always the same, and yet are changing every hour. Who can tell if they shall always desire what they now wish for? if they shall be to-morrow what they are to-day? if external objects and even a change in the constitution of the body, may not vary the modification of their minds? and if we may not be made miserable by the very means we have concerted for our happiness? Show me the fixed and certain rule of human wisdom, and I will take it for my guide. But if the best lesson it can teach us is to distrust our own strength, let us have recourse to that superior wisdom which cannot deceive us, and follow those dictates which cannot lead us astray. It is that wisdom I implore to enlighten my understanding to advise you; do you implore the same to direct your resolutions. Whatever these be, I well know you will take no step which does not, at present appear honourable and just; but this is not enough, it is necessary you should take such as will be always so; and of the means to do this, neither you nor I are of ourselves competent judges.

LETTER CLVII.

ANSWER.

FROM Eloisa! a letter from her, after seven years silence! Yes, it is her writing—I see, I feel it: can my eyes be a stranger to characters which my heart can never forget? And do you still remember my name? Do you still know how to write it? Does not your hand tremble as your pen forms the letters? Alas! Eloisa, whither have you hurried my wandering thoughts? The form, the fold, the seal, the superscription of your letter call to my mind those very different epistles which love used to dictate. In this the heart and hand seem to be in opposition to each other. —Ought the same hand-writing to be employed in committing to paper sentiments so very different.

You will be apt to judge, that my thinking so much of your former letters, too evidently confirms what you have suggested in your last. But you are mistaken. I plainly perceive that I am changed, and that you are no longer the same: and what proves it to me the most, is, that except your beauty and goodness, every thing I see in you now is a new subject of admiration. This remark may anticipate your assurance. I rely not on my own strength, but on the sentiment which makes it unnecessary. Inspired with every thing which I ought to honour in her whom I have ceased to adore, I know into what degree of respect my

former homage ought to be converted. Penetrated with the most lively gratitude, it is true I love you as much as ever; but I esteem and honour you most for the recovery of my reason.

Ever since the discerning and judicious Wolmar has discovered my real sentiments, I have acquired a better knowledge of myself, and am less alarmed at my weakness. Let it deceive my imagination as it will, the delusion will be still agreeable; it is sufficient that it can no longer offend you, and that my ideal errors serve in the end to preserve me from real danger.

Believe me, Eloisa, there are impressions, which neither time, circumstance, nor reason can efface; the wound may heal, but the scar will remain, an honourable mark that preserves the heart from any other wound. Love and inconstancy are incompatible; when a lover is fickle, he ceases to be a lover. For my part, I am no longer a lover; but in ceasing to adore you as such, I remain under your protection. I am no longer apprehensive of danger from you, but then you prevent my apprehensions from others. No, respectable Eloisa, you shall never see in me any other than a friend to your person, and a lover only of your virtues: but our love, our first, our matchless love shall never be rooted out of my heart. The remembrance of the flower of my age shall never be thus tarnished: for, were I to live whole centuries, those happy hours of my

youth will never return, nor be banished from my memory. We may, it is true, be no longer the same; but I shall never forget what we have been.

Let us come now to your cousin. I cannot help confessing, my dear friend, that since I have no longer dared to contemplate your charms, I have become more sensible to her's. What eyes could be perpetually straying from beauty to beauty, without fixing their admiration on either? Mine have lately gazed on her's perhaps with too much pleasure; and I must own that her charms, before imprinted on my heart, have, during my absence, made a deeper impression. The sanctuary of my heart is shut up; but her image is in the temple. I gradually become to her what I might have been at first; had I never beheld you; and it was in your power only to make me sensible of the difference between what I feel for her and the love I had for you. My senses, released from that terrible passion, embrace the delightful sentiments of friendship. But must love be the result of this union? Ah, Eloisa! what difference! where is the enthusiasm? the adoration? where are those divine transports, those distractions, a hundred times more sublime, more delightful, more forcible than reason itself? A slight warmth, a momentary delirium, seize me, affect me a while, and then vanish. In your cousin and me I see two friends who have a tender

regard for each other, and confess it. But have lovers a *regard* for each other? No, *you* and *I* are two words prohibited in the lovers' language. Two lovers are not two persons, but one.

1. Is my heart then really at ease? how can it be so? She is charming, she is both your friend and mine: I am attached to her by gratitude, and think of her in the most delightful moments of reflection. How many obligations are hence conferred on a susceptible mind, and how is it possible to separate the tenderest sentiments from those to which she has such an undoubted right! Alas! it is decreed, that, between you and her, my heart will never enjoy one peaceful moment!

O women, women! dear and fatal objects! whose nature has made beautiful for our torment, who punish us when we brave your power, who pursue when we dread your charms: whose love and hate are equally destructive; and whom we can neither approach nor fly with impunity! beauty, charm, sympathy! inconceivable being, or chimera! source of pain and pleasure! beauty, more terrible to mortals than the element to which the birth of your goddess is ascribed! it is you who create those tempests which are so destructive to mankind. How dearly, Eloisa! how dearly, Clara! do I purchase your cruel friendship!

I have lived in a tempest, and it is you who

have always raised it: but how different are the agitations which you separately excite! different as the waves of the lake of Geneva from those of the Atlantic ocean. The first are short and quick, and, by their constant agitation, are often fatal to the small barks that ride without making way on the surface: but on the ocean, calm and mild in appearance, we find ourselves mounted aloft, and softly borne forward to a vast distance on waves, whose motions are slow and almost imperceptible. We think we scud from the place, and arrive at the farthest parts of the earth.

Such is, in fact, the difference between the effects which your charms and her's have on my heart. That first unequalled passion, which determined the destiny of my life, and which nothing could conquer but itself, had its birth before I was sensible of its generation; it hurried me on before I knew where I was, and involved me in irrevocable ruin before I believed myself led astray. While the wind was fair, my labouring bark was every moment alternately soaring into the clouds, and plunging into the deep; but I am now becalmed, and know no longer where I am. On the contrary, I see, I feel too well how much her presence affects me, and conceive my danger greater than it really is; I experience some slight raptures, which are no sooner felt than gone. I am one moment transported with

passion, and the next peaceful and calm: in vain is the vessel beaten about by the waves, while there is no wind to fill its sails; my heart, contented with her real charms, does not exaggerate them; she appears more beautiful to my eyes than to my imagination; and I am more afraid of her when present than absent. Your charms have, on the contrary, had always a very different effect: but at Clarens I alternately experience both.

Since I left it, indeed, the image of our cousin presents itself sometimes more powerfully to my imagination. Unhappily, however, it never appears alone: it affects me not with love, but with disquietude.

These are, in reality, my sentiments with regard both to the one and the other. All the rest of your sex are nothing to me; the pangs I have so long suffered, have banished them entirely from my remembrance;

E fornito 'l mio tempo a mezzo gli anni.

My days elaps'd ere half my years are gone.

Adversity has supplied the place of fortitude, to enable me to conquer nature, and triumph over temptation. People in distress have few desires; you have taught me to vanquish by resisting them. An unhappy passion is an instrument of wisdom. My heart is become, if I may so express myself, the organ of all my wants; for

when that is at ease I want nothing. Let not you or your cousin disturb its tranquillity, and it will, for the future, be always at rest.

In this situation, what have I to fear from myself? and by what cruel precaution would you rob me of happiness, in order to prevent my being exposed to lose it? How capricious is it to have made me fight and conquer, to rob me afterwards of the reward of my victory? Do you not condemn those who brave unnecessary danger? why then did you recal me at so great a hazard, to run so many risks? or, why would you banish me when I am so worthy to remain? Ought you to have permitted your husband to take the trouble he has done for nothing? Why did you not prevent his taking the pains which you were determined to render fruitless? Why did you not say to him, *Leave the poor wretch at the other end of the world, or I shall certainly transport him again?* Alas! the more afraid you are of me, the sooner you ought to recal me home. It is not in your presence I am in danger, but in your absence; and I dread the power of your charms only where you are not. When the formidable Eloisa pursues me, I fly for refuge to Mrs. Wolmar, and I am secure. Whither shall I fly, if you deprive me of the asylum I find in her? All times and places are dangerous while she is absent; for in every place I find either Clara or Eloisa. In reflecting on the time past, in medi-

rating on the present, the one and the other alternately agitate my heart, and thus my restless imagination becomes tranquil only in your presence, and it is with you only I find security against myself. How shall I explain to you the change I perceive in approaching you? You have always exerted the same sovereign power; but its effects are now different from what they were: in suppressing the transports you once inspired, your empire is more noble and sublime; a peaceful serenity has succeeded to the storm of the passions; my heart, modelled by your's, loves in the same manner, and becomes tranquil by your example. But in this transitory repose I enjoy only a short truce with the passions; and, though I am exalted to the perfection of angels in your presence, I no sooner forsake you than I fall into my native meanness. Yes, Eloisa, I am apt sometimes to think I have two souls, and that the good one is deposited in your hands. Ah! why do you seek to separate me from it?

But you are fearful of the consequences of youthful desires, extinguished only by trouble and adversity. You are afraid for the young women who are in your house, and under your protection. You are afraid of that which the prudent Wolmar was not afraid of. How mortifying to me are such apprehensions! Do you then esteem your friend less than the meanest of your servants? I can, however, forgive your

thinking ill of me; but never your not paying yourself that respect which is so justly your due. No, Eloisa, the flame with which I once burnt has purified my heart; and I am no longer actuated like other men. After what I have been, should I so debase myself; though but for a moment, I would hide myself in the remotest corner of the earth, and should never think myself too far removed from Eloisa.

What! could I disturb that peaceful order and domestic tranquillity, in which I take so much pleasure? could I sully that sweet retreat of innocence and peace, wherein I have dwelt with so much honour? could I be so base as—— No, the most debauched, the most abandoned of men would be affected with so charming a picture. He could not fail of being enamoured with virtue in this asylum. So far from carrying hither his licentious manners, he would betake himself thither to cast them off. Could I then, Eloisa, be capable of what you insinuate? and that under your own eyes? No, my dear friend, open your doors to me without scruple, your mansion is to me the temple of virtue; its sacred image strikes me in every part of it, and binds me to its service. I am not indeed an angel; but I shall dwell in the habitation of angels, and imitate their example. Those who would not wish to resemble them will never seek their company.

You see it is with difficulty I come to the chief object of your last letter; that which I should have first and most maturely considered, and which only should now engage my thoughts. If I could pretend to the happiness proposed to me. O Eloisa, benevolent and incomparable friend! in offering me thus your other half, the most valuable present in the universe next to yourself, you do more for me if possible than ever you have done before. A blind ungovernable passion might have prevailed on you to give me yourself; but to give me your friend is the sincerest proof of your esteem. From this moment I begin to think myself, indeed, a man of real merit, since I am thus distinguished. But how cruel, at the same time, is this proof of it. In accepting your offer I should belie my heart, and to deserve must refuse it. You know me and may judge.

It is not enough that your charming cousin should engage my affections; I know she should be loved as you are. But will it, can it be? or does it depend on me to do her that justice, in this particular, which is her due? Alas! if you intended ever to unite me to her, why did you not leave me a heart to give her; a heart which she might have inspired with new sentiments, and which in turn might have offered her the first-fruits of love! I ought to have a heart at ease and at liberty, such as was that of the prudent and

worthy Orbe, to love her only as he did. I ought to be as deserving as he was, in order to succeed him: otherwise the comparison between her former and present situation will only serve to render the latter less supportable; the cold and divided love of a second husband, so far from consoling her for the loss of the first, will but make her regret him the more. By her union with me, she will only convert a tender grateful friend into a common husband. What will she gain by such an exchange? She will be doubly a loser by it; her susceptible mind will severely feel its loss; and how shall I support a continual sadness, of which I am the cause, and which I cannot remove? In such a situation, alas! her grief would be first fatal to me. No, Eloisa, I can never be happy at the expence of her ease. I love her too well to marry her.

Be happy! no, can I be happy without making her so? can either of the parties be separately happy or miserable in marriage? are not their pleasures and pains common to both? and does not the chagrin which one gives to the other always rebound to the person who caused it? I should be made miserable by her afflictions, without being made happy by her goodness. Beauty, fortune, merit, love, all might conspire to ensure my felicity! but my heart, my froward heart, would counter-work them all; would poison the

source of my delights, and make me miserable in the very midst of happiness.

In my present situation, I take pleasure in her company: but if I should attempt to augment that pleasure by a closer union, I shall deprive myself of the most agreeable moments of my life. Her turn for humour and gaiety may give an amorous cast to her friendship, but this is only whilst there are witnesses to her favours. I may also feel too lively an emotion for her; but it is only when by your presence you have banished every tender sentiment for Eloisa. When she and I are by ourselves, it is you only who render our conversation agreeable. The more our attachment increases, the more we think on the source from which it sprang; the ties of friendship are drawn closer, and we love each other but to talk of you. Hence arise a thousand pleasing reflections, pleasing to Clara, and more so to me, all which a closer union would infallibly destroy. Will not such reflections, in that case too delightful, be a kind of infidelity to her? and with what face can I make a beloved and respectable wife the confidant of those infidelities of which my heart, in spite of me, would be guilty? This heart could no longer transfuse itself into her's. No longer daring to talk of you, I should soon forbear to speak at all. Honour and duty imposing on me a new reserve, would thus estrange me from the wife of my bosom, and I

should have no longer a guide or a counsellor to direct my steps or correct my errors. Is this the homage she has a right to expect from me? is this that tribute of gratitude and tenderness which I ought to pay her? is it thus that I am to make her and myself happy?

Is it possible that Eloisa can have forgotten our mutual vows? For my part, I never can forget them. I have lost all, except my sincerity, and that I will preserve inviolate to my last hour. As I could not live for you, I will die unmarried. Nay, had I not already made such a promise to myself, I would do it now. For though it be a duty to marry, it is yet a more indispensable one not to make any person unhappy; and all the sentiments such a contract would now excite in me would be mixed with the constant regret of that which I once vainly hoped for: a regret which would at once be my torment, and that of her who should be unfortunate enough to be my wife. I should require of her those days of bliss which I expected with you. How should I support the comparison! what woman in the world could bear that? Ah, no, I could never endure the thoughts of being at once deprived of you, and destined to be the husband of another.

Seek not then, my dear friend, to shake those resolutions on which depends the repose of my life: seek not to recal me out of that state of an-

nihilation into which I am fallen; lest, in bringing me back to a sense of my existence, my wounds should bleed afresh, and I should again sink under a load of misfortunes. Since my return, I perceived how deeply I became interested in whatever concerned your charming friend; but I was not alarmed at it, as I knew the situation of my heart would never permit me to be too solicitous. Indeed, I was not displeased with an emotion, which, while it added softness to the attachment I always had for Clara, would assist in diverting my thoughts from a more dangerous object, and enable me to support your presence with greater confidence. This emotion has something in it of the pleasure of love, without any of its pains. The calm delight I take in seeing her is not disturbed by the restless desire of possessing her: contented to pass my whole life in the manner I passed the last winter, I find between you both that peaceful and agreeable situation*, which tempers the austerity of virtue, and renders its lessons amiable. If a vain transport affects me for a moment, every thing conspires to suppress it; and I have too effectually vanquished those infinitely more impetuous and

* This is a direct contradiction to what he asserted before. The poor philosopher seems to be in a droll dilemma between two pretty women. One might be apt to think he chose to make love to neither, that he might the better love them both.

dangerous emotions to fear any that can assail me now. I honour your friend no less than I love her, and that is saying every thing. But, should I consult only my own interest? the rights of the tenderest friendship are too valuable to risk their loss, by endeavouring to extend them: and I need not even think of the respect which is her due, to prevent me ever saying a single word in private conversation which would require an interpretation, or which she ought not to understand. She may, perhaps, have sometimes remarked a little too much solicitude in my behaviour towards her; but she has surely never observed in my heart any desire to express it. Such as I was for six months past, such would I be with regard to her as long as I live. I know none who approach you so perfect as she is; but where she even more perfect than yourself, I feel that after having been your lover, I should never have become hers.

But before I conclude this letter, I must give you my opinion of yours. Yes, Eloisa, with all your prudence and virtue, I can discover in it the scruples of a timorous mind, which thinks it a duty to frighten itself, and conceives its security lies in being afraid. This extreme timidity is as dangerous as excessive confidence. In constantly representing to us imaginary monsters, it wastes our strength by combating chimeras; and,

by terrifying us without cause, make us less on our guard against, as well as less capable of discerning real dangers. Read over again, now and then, the letter which Lord B—— wrote to you last year on the subject of your husband; you will find in it some good advice, that may be of service to you in many respects. I do not discommend your devotion, it is affecting, amiable, and like yourself; it is such as even your husband should be pleased with. But take care lest timidity and precaution lead you to quietism; and lest by representing to yourself danger on every side, you are induced at length to confide in nothing. Do not you know, my dear friend, that a state of virtue is a state of warfare? Let us employ our thoughts less on the dangers which threaten us, than on ourselves, that we may always be prepared to withstand temptation. If to run in the way of temptation is to deserve to fall, to shun it with too much solicitude is often to fly from the opportunities of discharging the noblest duties: it is not good to be always thinking of temptations, even with a view to avoid them. I shall never seek temptation, but in whatever situation Providence may place me for the future, the eight months I passed at Clarens will be my security; nor shall I be afraid that any one will rob me of the prize you taught me to deserve. I shall never be weaker than I have been, nor shall ever have greater temptations to resist. I have left the bit-

terness of remorse, and I have tasted the sweets of victory, after all which, I need not hesitate a moment in making my choice; every circumstance of my past life, even my errors, being a security for my future behaviour.

I shall not pretend to enter with you into any new or profound disquisitions concerning the order of the universe, and the government of those beings of which it is composed: it will be sufficient for me to say, that, in matters so far above human comprehension, there is no other way of rightly judging of things invisible, but by induction from those which are visible; and that all analogy makes for those general laws which you seem to reject. The most rational ideas we can form of the Supreme Being confirm this opinion: for, although Omnipotence lies under no necessity of adopting methods to abridge his labour, it is nevertheless worthy of Supreme Wisdom to prefer the most simple modes of action, that there may be nothing useless either in cause or effect. In the formation of man he endowed him with all the necessary faculties to accomplish what should be required of him; and when we ask of him the power to do good, we ask nothing of him but what he has already given us. He has given us understanding to know what is good, a heart to love*, and liberty to make choice of it.

* St. Preux supposes moral conscience to depend on sen-

Therefore, in these sublime gifts consists divine grace; and as we have all received it, we are all accountable for its effects.

I have heard, in my time, a good deal of argument against the free-agency of man, and despise all its sophistry. A casuist may take what pains he will to prove that I am no free agent, my innate sense of freedom constantly destroys his arguments: for whatever choice I make after deliberation, I feel plainly that it depended only on myself to have made the contrary. Indeed, all the scholastic subtilties I have heard on this head are futile and frivolous; because they prove too much, are equally used to oppose truth and falsehood; and, whether man be a free agent or not, serve equally to prove one or the other. With these kind of reasoners, the Deity himself is not a free agent, and the word liberty is, in fact, a term of no meaning. They triumph not in having solved the difficulty, but in having substituted a chimera in its room. They begin by supposing that every intelligent being is merely passive, and from that supposition deduce consequences to prove its inactivity: a very convenient method of argumentation truly! If they accuse their adversaries of reasoning in this manner, they do us injustice.—We do not *suppose* ourselves free and active beings, not on judgment, which is contrary to the opinion of the philosophers. I am apt to think, however, that he is in the right.

ings: we feel that we are so. It belongs to them to show not only that this sentiment may deceive us, but that it really does so*. The Bishop of Cloyne has demonstrated that without any diversity in appearances, body or matter may have no absolute existence; but is this enough to induce us to affirm that it absolutely has no existence? In all this, the mere phenomenon would cost more trouble than the reality: and I will always hold by that which appears the most simple.

I do not believe, therefore, that after having provided in every shape for the wants of man in his formation, God interests himself in an extraordinary manner for one person more than another. Those who abuse the common aids of Providence are unworthy such assistance, and those who make good use of them have no occasion for any other. Such a partiality appears to me injurious to divine justice. You will say, this severe and discouraging doctrine may be deduced from the Holy Scripture. Be it so. Is it not my first duty to honour my Creator? In whatever veneration then I hold the sacred text, I hold its author in still greater; and I could sooner be induced to believe the Bible corrupted or unintel-

* This is not the matter in dispute. It is to know whether the will be determined without a cause, or what is the cause that determines the will.

ligible, than that God can be malevolent or unjust. St. Paul would not have the vessel say to the potter who formed it, why hast thou framed me thus? this is very well if the potter should apply it only to such services as he constructed it to perform; but if he should censure this vessel, as being inadequate to the purpose for which it was constructed; has it not a right to ask, why hast thou made me thus?

But, does it follow from hence that prayer is useless? God forbid that I should deprive myself of that resource. Every act of the understanding which raises us to God carries us above ourselves; in imploring his assistance, we learn to experience it. It is not his immediate act that operates on us, it is we that improve ourselves, by raising our thoughts in prayer to him*. All that we ask aright he bestows: and, as you observe, we acquire strength in confessing our weakness. But if we abuse this ordinance, and turn mystics, instead of raising ourselves to God, we are lost in our own wild imaginations; in seeking grace, we renounce reason; in order to obtain of Heaven one blessing, we trample under foot another: and in obstinately persisting that Heaven should enlighten our hearts, we extinguish the light of our understandings. But who are we that should

* Our gallant philosopher, having imitated Abelard in his practice, seems desirous also of adopting his principles; their notions of prayer being a good deal alike.

insist on the Deity's performing miracles, when we please, in our favour ?

You know very well, there is no good thing that may not be carried into a blameless excess ; even devotion itself, when it degenerates into the madness of enthusiasm. Yours is too pure ever to arrive at this excess ; but you have reason to be on your guard against a less degree of it. I have heard you often censure the ecstasies of the pietists† : but do you know from whence they arise ? from allotting a longer time to prayer than is consistent with the weakness of human nature. Hence the spirits are exhausted, the imagination takes fire, they see visions, they become inspired and prophetic ; nor is it then in the power of the understanding to stop the progress of fanaticism.

Now, you shut yourself frequently in your closet, and are constant in prayer. You do not indeed as yet converse with pietists, but you read their books. Not that I ever censured your taste for the writings of the worthy Fenelon : but what have you to do with those of his disciple ? You

† A sort of enthusiasts that take it into their heads to follow the gospel strictly, according to the letter ; in the manner of the Methodists in England, the Moravians in Germany, and the Jansenists in France ; excepting, however, that the latter want only to be more severe and persecuting than their enemies.

read Muralt. I indeed read him too : but I make choice of his letters, you of his Divine instinct : but remark his end ; lament the extravagant errors of that sensible man, and think of yourself. At present a pious, a true Christian, beware, Eloisa, of becoming a mere devotee.

I receive your counsel, my dear friend, with the docility of a child, and give you mine with the zeal of a father. Since virtue, instead of dissolving our attachments, has rendered them indissoluble, the same lessons may be of use to both, as the same interests connect us. Never shall our hearts speak to each other, never shall our eyes meet without presenting to both a respectable object which shall mutually elevate our sentiments, the perfection of the one reciprocally assisting the other.

But though our deliberations may be common to both, the conclusion is not ; it is yours alone to decide. Cease not, then ; you have ever been mistress of my destiny, cease not to be so still. Weigh my arguments, and pronounce sentence : whatever you order me to do, I will submit to your direction, and will at least deserve the continuance of it. Should you think it improper for me to see you personally again, you will yet be always present to my mind, and preside over my actions. Should you deprive me of the honour of educating your offspring, you will not deprive

me of the virtues which you have inspired. These are the offspring of your mind, which mine adopts as its own, and will never bear to have them torn from it.

Speak to me Eloisa, freely. And as I have now been explicit as to what I think and feel on this occasion, tell me what I must do. You know how far my destiny is connected with that of my illustrious friend. I have not consulted him on this occasion; I have neither shown him this letter nor yours. If he should know that you disapprove his project, or rather that of your husband, he will reject it himself; and I am far from desigining to deduce from thence any objection to your scruples; he only ought to be ignorant of them till you have finally determined. In the mean time, I shall find some means or other to delay our departure, in which, though they may surprise him a little, I know he will acquiesce. For my own part, I had rather never see you more, than to see you only just to bid you again adieu: and to live with you as a stranger would be a state of mortification which I have not deserved.

L E T T E R CLVIII.

FROM MRS. WOLMAR.

How does your head-strong imagination affright and bewilder itself! and at what, pray? truly at the sincerest proofs of my friendship and esteem which you ever experienced; at the peaceful reflections which my solicitude for your real happiness inspired; at the most honourable that was ever made you; at my desire, perhaps an indiscreet one, of uniting you by indissoluble ties to our family; at the desire of making a relation, a kinsman of an ingrate, who affects to believe I want to discard him as a friend. To remove your present uneasiness, you need only take what I write in the most natural sense the words will bear. But you have long delighted in tormenting yourself with false constructions. Your letters are like your life, sublime and mean, masterly and puerile. Ah, my dear philosopher! will you never cease to be a child?

Where, pray, have you learnt that I intended to impose on you new laws, to break with you, and send you back to the farthest part of the world? Do you really find this to be the tenor of my letter? In anticipating the pleasure of living with you, I was fearful of those inconveniences, which I conceive might possibly arise; therefore, endeavour to remove them, by making

your fortune more equal to your merit and the regard I had for you. This is my whole crime; is there any thing in it at which you have reason to be alarmed?

Indeed, my friend, you are in the wrong; for you are not ignorant how dear you are to me, and how easy it is for you to obtain your wish, without seeking occasion to torment others or yourself.

You may be assured, that, if your residence here is agreeable to you, it will be equally so to me; and that nothing M. Wolmar has done for me gives me greater satisfaction than the care he has taken to establish you in this house. I agree to it with pleasure, and now we shall be useful to each other. More ready to listen to good advice than to suggest it to ourselves, we have both occasion for a guide. Who can be more sensible of the danger of going astray than he whose return has cost him so dear? what object can better represent that danger? After having broken through such connexions as once subsisted between us, the remembrance of them should influence us to do nothing unworthy of the virtuous motives which induced us to break them. Yes, I shall always think myself obliged to make you the witness of every action of my life, and to communicate to you every sentiment with which my heart is inspired. Ah! my friend! I may be weak before

the rest of the world, but I can answer for myself in your company.

It is in this delicacy, which always survives true love, and not in M. Wolmar's subtle distinctions, that we are to look for the cause of that elevation of soul, that innate fortitude, we experience. Such an explication is at least more natural, and does more honour to our hearts, than his, and has a greater tendency to encourage us to virtue, which alone is sufficient to give it the preference. Hence you may be assured, that, so far am I from being in such a whimsical disposition as you imagine, that I am just the reverse. In so much that, if the project of your returning to reside here must be given up, I shall esteem such an event as a great misfortune to you, to me, to my children, and even to my husband; on whose account alone you know I have many reasons for desiring your presence. But to speak only of my own particular inclination: you remember your first arrival. Did I show less pleasure at seeing you than you felt in seeing me? Has it ever appeared to you, that your stay at Clarens gave me the least trouble or uneasiness? Did you think I betrayed the least pleasure at your departure? Must I go farther, and speak to you with my usual freedom? I will frankly confess to you, then, that the six last months we passed together were the happiest of my life, and that in that short space of time, I tasted all the happi-

ness of which my sensibility has furnished me the idea.

Never shall I forget one day, in particular, of the past winter, when, after having been reading the journal of your voyages, and that of your friend's adventures, we supped in the Apollo. It was then that, reflecting on the felicity with which Providence had blessed me in this world, I looked round, and saw all my friends about me; my father, my husband, my children, my cousin, Lord B——, and you, without counting Fanny, who did not cast the least blemish on the scene. This little saloon, said I to myself, contains all that is dear to my heart, and perhaps all that is desirable in this world. I am here surrounded by every thing that interests me. The whole universe to me is in this little spot. I enjoy at once the regard I have for my friends, that which they have for me, and that which they have for each other: their mutual good-will either comes from, or relates to me: I see nothing but what seems to extend my being, and nothing to divide it. I exist in a manner in all those who are about me: my imagination can extend no farther: I have nothing more to desire: to reflect and to be happy is with me the same thing: I live at once in all that I love: I am replete with happiness, and satisfied with life: come, death, when thou wilt! I no longer dread thy power: the measure of my life is full, and I have nothing now to experience.

worth enjoyment. The greater pleasure I enjoyed in your company, the more agreeable is it to me to reflect on it, and the more disquietude also hath every thing given me that might disturb it. We will for a moment lay aside that timid morality and pretended devotion, with which you reproach me. You must confess, at least, that the social pleasures we tasted, sprang from that openness of heart, by which every thought, every sentiment, of the one was communicated to the other, and from which every one, conscious of being what he ought, appeared such as he really was. Let us suppose now any secret intrigue, any connexion necessary to be concealed, any motive of reserve and secrecy intruding on our harmony ; that moment the reciprocal pleasure we felt in seeing each other would vanish. Shyness and restraint would ensue ; we should no sooner meet together than we should wish to part ; and at length circumspection and decorum would bring on distrust and distaste. It is impossible long to love those of whom we are afraid or suspicious. They soon become troublesome——Eloisa troublesome !——troublesome to her friend ! No, no, that cannot be ; there can be no evils in nature, but such as it is possible to support.

In thus freely telling you my scruples, I do not pretend, however, to make you change your resolutions ; but to induce you to reconsider the motives on which they are founded ; lest, in tak-

ing a step all the consequences of which you may not foresee, you might have reason to repent at a time when you will not dare retract it. As to M. Wolmar's having no fears, it was not his place to fear, but yours. No one is so proper a judge of what is to be feared of you as yourself. Consider the matter well, then; and, if nothing is in reality to be feared, tell me so, and I shall think of it no more; for I know your sincerity, and never can distrust your intentions. Your heart may be capable of an accidental error; but can never be guilty of a premeditated crime, and this it is that makes the distinction between a weak man and a wicked one.

Besides, though my objections had really more weight than I am inclined to think they have, why must things be viewed in their most disadvantageous light? Surely there can be no necessity for such extreme precautionary measures. It cannot be requisite that you should break through all your projects, and fly from us for ever.— Though young in years, you are possessed of all the experience of age. The tranquillity of mind which succeeds the noble passion, is a sensation which increases by fruition. A susceptible heart may dread a state of repose to which it has been unaccustomed; but a little time is sufficient to reconcile us to our peaceful situation, and in a little time more we give it the preference. For my part, I foresee the hour of your security to

be nearer than you yourself imagine. Extremes, you know, never last long; you have loved too much not to become in time indifferent: the cinder which is cast from the furnace can never be lighted again: but before it becomes such the coal must be totally burnt out. Be vigilant but for a few years more, and you will then have nothing to fear; your acceptance of my proposal would at once have removed all danger; but, independant of that view, such an attachment has charms enough to be desired for its own sake; and if your delicacy prevents you from closing with my proposals, I have no need to be informed how much such a restraint must cost you. At the same time, however, I am afraid, that the pretences which impose on your reason are many of them frivolous: I am afraid that, in piquing yourself on the fulfilling of engagements which no longer exist, you only make a false shew of virtue, in a constancy for which you are by no means to be commended, and which is at present entirely misplaced. I have already told you that I think the observance of a rash and criminal vow is an additional crime. If yours were not so at first, it is become so now; and that is sufficient to annul it. The promise which no man ought to break is that of being always a man of virtue, and resolute in the discharge of his duty; to change when that is changed is not levity, but constancy. Act at all times as virtue requires.

you to do; and you will never break your word. But if there be among your scruples any solid objection, we will examine it at leisure. In the mean time, I am not very sorry that you did not embrace my scheme with the same avidity as I formed it; that my blunder, if it be one, may give you less pain. I had meditated this project during the absence of my cousin, with whom, however, I have since had some general conversation on the subject of a second marriage, and find her so averse to it, that, in spite of the regard which I know she has for you, I am afraid I must exert a greater authority than becomes me, to overcome her reluctance; for this is a point in which friendship ought to respect the bent of the inclinations,

I will own, nevertheless, that I still abide by my design: it would be so agreeable to us all; would so honourably extricate you from your present precarious situation in life; would so unite all our interests, and make so natural an obligation of that friendship which is so delighted to all, that I cannot think of giving it up entirely. No, my friend, you can never be too nearly allied to me; it is not even enough that you might be my cousin; I could wish you were my brother.

Whatever may be the consequence of these notions, do more justice to my sentiments for you. Make use without reserve of my friend-

ship, my confidence, and my esteem. Remember I shall not prescribe any rules to you; nor do I think I have any reason to do it. Deny me not, however, the privilege of giving you advice, but imagine not I lay you under any commands. If you think you can securely reside at Clarens, come hither; stay here; you cannot give me greater pleasure. But, if you think a few years longer absence necessary to cure the suspicious remains of impetuous youth, write to me often in your absence; come and see us as often as you will, and let us cultivate a correspondence founded on the most cordial intimacy.

What pains will not such consolation alleviate? What absence will not be supportable under the pleasing hope of at last ending our days together! I will do yet more; I am ready to put one of my children under your care; I shall think him safer in your hands than my own; and, when you bring him back, I know not which of you will give me the greater pleasure by your return. On the other hand, if you become entirely reasonable, banish your chimerical notions, and are willing to deserve my cousin, come, pay her your best respects, and make her happy. Come then, and surmount every obstacle that opposes your success, and make a conquest of her heart; such assistance as my friendship can give, shall not on my part be wanting. Come, and make each other happy, and nothing more will be want-

ing to render me completely so. But, whatever resolution you take, after having maturely considered the matter, speak confidently, and affront your friend no more by your groundless suspicions.

Let me not, however, in thinking so much of you, forget myself. My turn to be heard must come at last; for you act with your friends in a dispute, as with your adversaries at chess; you defend yourself by attacking them. You excuse your being a philosopher, by accusing me of being a devotee. I am, then, in your opinion, a devotee, or ready to become one: well, be it so. Contemptible denominations never change the nature of things. If devotion is commendable, why am I to blame in being devout? But, perhaps, that epithet is too low for you. The dignity of the philosopher disdains the worship of the vulgar: it would serve God in a more sublime manner, and raise even to Heaven itself its pretensions and its pride. Poor philosophers!—but to return to myself.

I have, from my childhood, respected virtue, and have always cultivated my reason. I endeavoured to regulate my conduct by human understanding and sentiment, and have been ill conducted. Before you deprive me of the guide I have chosen, give me another on which I may depend. I thought myself as wise as other people, and yet a thousand others have lived more pru-

dently than I: they must, therefore, have had resources which I had not. Why is it that I, knowing myself well born, have had reason to conceal my life and conversation from the world? Why did I hate the sin which I committed even in spite of myself? I thought I knew my own strength, I relied on it, and was deceived. All the resistance which was in my own power I think I made; and yet I fell.—How must those have done that have escaped? they must have had a better support.

From their example I was induced to seek the same support, and have found in it a peculiar advantage which I did not expect. During the reign of the passions, they themselves contribute to the continuance of the anxieties they at first occasion; they retain hope always by the side of desire, and hence we are enabled to support the absence of felicity: if our expectations are disappointed, hope supplies their place; and the agreeable delusion lasts as long as the passion which gave it birth. Thus, in a situation of that kind, passion supports itself, and the very solicitude it causes is a chimerical pleasure, which is substituted for real enjoyment. Nay, more, those who have no desires must be very unhappy; they are deprived, if I may be allowed the expression, of all they possess. We enjoy less that which we obtain, than that which we hope for, and are seldom happy but in expectation. In fact, man, made to

desire every thing and obtain little, of boundless avarice, yet narrow capacity, has received of Heaven a consolatory aid, which brings to him in idea every thing he desires, displays to his imagination, represents it to his view, and in one sense makes it his own ; but to render such imaginary property still more flattering and agreeable, it is even modified to his passion. But this shadow vanishes the moment the real object appears ; the imagination can no longer magnify that which we actually possess ; the charms of illusion cease where those of enjoyment begin. The world of fancy, therefore, the land of chimeras, is the only world worthy to be inhabited ; and such is the inanity of human enjoyments, that, except that Being which is self-existent, there is nothing delightful but that which has no existence at all.

If this effect does not always follow in the particular objects of our passions, it is infallible in the common sentiment which includes the whole. To live without pain is incompatible with our state of mortality : it would be in fact to die.—He who has every thing in his power, if a creature, must be miserable, as he would be deprived of the pleasure of desiring ; than which every other want would be more supportable.*

* Hence it is that every sovereign who aspires to be despotic, aspires to the honour of being miserable. In every kingdom in the world, would you see the man who is the

This is, indeed, what I have in part experienced since my marriage and your return. Every thing around me gives me cause of content, and yet I am not contented. A secret languor steals into the bottom of my heart : I find it puffed up and void, as you formerly said was the case with yours : all my attachments are not sufficient to fill it. This disquietude, I confess, is strange : but it is nevertheless true. O, my friend ! I am indeed too happy : my happiness is a burden to me. Can you think of a remedy for this disgust ? For my part, I must own that a sentiment so unreasonable, and so involuntary, has in a great measure diminished the value of life, and I cannot imagine what blessings it can bestow which I want, or with which I should be satisfied. Can any woman be more susceptible than I am ? Can she love her father, her husband ; her children, her friends, her relations, better than I do ? Can she be more generally beloved ? Can she lead a life more agreeable to her taste ? Or can she be more at liberty to exchange it for any other ? Can she enjoy better health ? Can she have more expedients to divert her, or stronger ties to bind her to the world ? And yet, notwithstanding all this, I am constantly uneasy : my heart sighs after something of which it is entirely ignorant.

most unhappy of all his countrymen, go directly to the sovereign, particularly if he be an absolute monarch.

Therefore, finding nothing in this globe capable of giving it satisfaction, my desiring soul seeks an object in another world ; in elevating itself to the source of sentiment and existence, its languor vanishes ; it is re-animated ; it acquires new strength and new life. It thence obtains a new existence, independant of corporeal passions, or rather it exists no longer in me, but in the immensity of the Supreme Being ; and, disencumbered for a while from its terrestrial shackles, returns to them again with patience, consoled with the expectation of futurity.

You smile at all this, my good friend ; I understand you. I have, indeed, pronounced my own condemnation, having formerly censured the heart which I now approve. To this I have only one word to answer ; and that is, I then spoke without experience. I do not pretend to justify it in every shape. I do not pretend to say this visionary taste is prudent ; I only say, it is a delightful supplement to that sense of happiness which in other things exhausts itself by enjoyment. If it be productive of evil, doubtless it ought to be rejected ; if it deceives the heart by false pleasure, it ought also on that account to be rejected. But, after all, which has the greater incentive to virtue, the philosopher with his sublime maxims, or the Christian with his humble simplicity ? Who is most happy even in this world, the sage with

his profound understanding, or the enthusiast with his rapture of devotion! What business have I to think or imagine when my faculties are all in a manner alienated? Will you say intoxication has its pleasures; be it so, and be mine esteemed such, if you will. Either leave me in this agreeable delirium, or show me a more delightful situation.

I have condemned, indeed, the ecstasies of the mystics, and condemn them still, when they serve to detach us from our duty; and by raising in us a disgust against an active life by the charms of contemplation, seduce us into that state of quietism which you imagine me so near; and from which I believe myself nevertheless to be as far distant as you. I know very well that to serve God is not to pass our lives on our knees in prayer; that it is to discharge on earth those obligations which our duty requires; it is to do, with a view to please him, every thing which the situation in which he hath placed us demands,

Il cor gradisce ;

E serve a lui ch' il suo dover compisce.

To have a heart that glows with pure desire

To love and serve where duty may require.

We ought first to perform the duties of our station, and then pray when we have time. This is the rule I have endeavoured to follow: I do not make that self-examination, with which you

reproach me, a task, but a recreation : I do not see why, among the pleasures that are within my reach, I should be forbidden the most affecting and the most innocent of all.

I have examined myself with more severity, since the receipt of your letter. I have inquired into the effects which the pious inclination that so much displeases you produces in my mind ; and I can safely say, I see nothing that should give me reason to fear, at least so soon as you imagine, the evils of excessive and superfluous devotion.

In the first place, I have not so fervent a longing after this exercise as to give me pain when I am deprived of an opportunity, nor am I out of humour at every avocation from it. It never interrupts my thoughts in the business of the day, nor gives me any disgust or impatience in the discharge of my duty. If retirement be sometimes necessary, it is when I have felt some disagreeable emotion, and am better in my closet than elsewhere. It is there that, entering into the examination of myself, I recover my temper and ease. If any care troubles me, if any pain affects me, it is there I go and lay them down. Every pain, every trouble, vanishes before a greater object. In reflecting on all the bounties of Providence towards me, I am ashamed to be sensible of such trifling ills, and to forget its greater mercies. I require neither frequent nor long inter-

vals of solitude. When I am affected by involuntary sadness, the shedding a few tears before him who is the comforter of hearts relieves mine in an instant. My reflections are never bitter nor grievous; even my repentance is free from dread: my errors give me less cause of fear than of shame; I regret that I have committed them, but I feel no remorse, nor dread of their effects. The God I serve is a merciful Being; a Father, whose goodness only affects me, and surpasses all his other attributes. His power astonishes me; his immensity confounds my ideas: his justice—but he has made man weak; and though he be just, he is merciful. An avenging God is the God of the wicked. I can neither fear him on my own account, nor pray for his vengeance to be exerted against any other. It is the God of peace, the God of goodness whom I adore. I know, I feel, I am the work of his hands, and trust to see him at the last day such as he has manifested himself to my heart during my life.

It is impossible for me to tell you how many pleasing ideas hence render my days agreeable, and give joy to my heart. In leaving my closet in such a disposition, I feel myself more light and gay. Every care vanishes, every embarrassment is removed; nothing rough or disagreeable appears; but all is smooth and flowing: every thing wears a pleasant countenance: it costs me no pains to be in good humour: I love those bet-

ter whom I loved before, and am still more agreeable to them: even my husband is more pleased with the disposition which is the effect of such rational devotion. Devotion, he says, is the opium of the soul. When taken in small quantities, it enlivens, it animates, it supports it: a stronger dose lulls it to sleep, enrages, or destroys it. I hope I shall never proceed to such extremes.

You see I am not so much offended at the title of devotee, as perhaps you expected; but then I do not value it at the rate you imagine: yet I would not have the term *devotion* applied to any affected external deportment, and to a sort of employment which dispenses with every other. Thus that Mrs. Guyon you mention, had, in my opinion, done better to have carefully discharged her duty as mistress of her family, to have educated her children in the Christian faith, and to have governed her servants prudently, than to have composed books of devotion, disputed with bishops, and at last be imprisoned in the Bastile, for her unintelligible reveries.

I approve just as little of that mystical and metaphorical language, which feeds the heart with chimeras, and in the place of spiritual love substitutes sentiments too nearly allied to carnal affections, and too apt to excite them. The more susceptible the heart, or lively the imagination, the more we ought to be on our guard against

those images by which they may be affected; for how can we see the relations of the mystical object, if we do not at the same time see the sensual; and how can a modest woman have the assurance to contemplate those objects in her imagination which she would blush to look on.

But what sets me most against these devotees by profession, is that affectation of manners which renders them insensible to humanity; that excessive pride which makes them look down with pity on the rest of mankind. If ever they condescend to stoop from their imaginary elevation to do an act of charity, it is always done in a manner extremely mortifying to the object: their pity is so cruel and insulting, their justice is so rigid, their charity so severe, their zeal so bitter, their contempt so much like hatred, that even the insensibility of the rest of the world is less cruel than their pity. Their love for Heaven serves them as an excuse for loving nobody on earth; they have even no affection for one another: nor is there an instance of sincere friendship to be found among people of extreme devotion. The more detached they affect to be from the world, the more they expect from it; and one would think their devotion to God is exerted only that they may have a pretext to exercise his authority over the rest of his creatures.

I have such an aversion for all abuses of this kind as should naturally be my security: if, ne-

vertheless, I am doomed to fall, it will not be voluntarily, and I hope from the friendship of those who are about me, that it will not be without warning. I must own, I now think that it was possible for my former inquietude concerning my husband to have effected such a change. Happily, the prudent letter of my Lord B——, to which you very reasonably refer me, together with his sensible and consolatory conversation, as well as yours, have entirely dissipated my fears, and changed my principles. I now see plainly that an intolerating spirit must by degrees become obdurate. For what charity can be long preserved for those who we think must inevitably be damned? To love them would be to hate God for punishing them. To act, then, on principles of humanity, we must take upon ourselves, to condemn actions only, and not men. Let us not assume the horrible function of devils. Let us not so lightly throw open the gates of hell for our fellow creatures. Alas! if all those are destined to be eternally miserable who deceive themselves, where is the mortal who can avoid it?

O my friends! of what a load have you eased my heart? in teaching me that an error in judgment is no crime, you have delivered me from a thousand tormenting scruples. I leave to others the subtle interpretation of dogmas which I do not comprehend, and content myself with those

glaring truths which strike and at once convince me; those practical truths which instruct me in my duty. As to any thing further, I abide by the rule of your old answer to M. Wolmar. A man is not master of his own sentiments to believe or disbelieve what he pleases. Can it be a crime for one not to be a logician? No, it is not the business of conscience to instruct us in the truth of things, but in maxims of our duty. It does not teach us to reason well, but to act aright. In what can my husband be criminal before God? Does he turn his eyes from the contemplation of the Deity? God himself hath hid his face from his view. He does not shun the truth; the truth avoids him. He is not actuated by pride; he does not seek to convert any one to his own opinion. He is glad they are of a different one. He approves of our sentiments, he wishes he had the same, but cannot. He is deprived of our consolations and our hopes. He acts uprightly, without even expecting a recompence: he is in fact more virtuous, more disinterested than we. | He is indeed truly to be pitied! but wherefore should he be punished? No: goodness, sincerity, honesty, virtue, these are what Heaven requires, and what he will undoubtedly reward: these constitute the true service which the Deity requires, and that service M. Wolmar most invariably performs. If God judges of our faith by our works, to be truly virtuous is to believe in him. A true

Christian is a virtuous man : the real infidels are the vicious.

Be not surprised, therefore, my dear friend, that I do not dispute with you many particulars of your letter, concerning which we are not of the same opinion. I know too well what you are, to be in pain about what you believe. What do all these idle questions about free agency concern me? Whether I myself have the power to do good, or can obtain it by prayer, if in the end I am enabled to do it, does it not amount to the same thing? Whether I acquire what is wanting by asking for it, or the Deity grants it to my prayers, if it be necessary to ask in order to have it, is not this a sufficient explanation? Happy enough to agree about the principal articles of our faith, why need we inquire farther? ought we to be desirous of penetrating into the bottomless abyss of metaphysics, and, in disputing about the divine essence, throw away the short time which is allotted us here to revere and honour the Deity? We are ignorant what he is; but we know that he exists, and that is sufficient: he manifests himself in his works; we feel him constantly within us. We may dispute, but cannot sincerely disbelieve his existence. He has given us that degree of sensibility which enables us to perceive, to embrace him; let us pity those to whom he has not imparted such a portion of sus-

ceptibility, without flattering ourselves that we shall be able to make them sensible of what they cannot feel. Let us respect his decrees in silence, and do our duty : this is the best method to make profelytes.

Do you know any man of better sense or a more enlightened understanding than M. Wolmar ? Do you know any one more sincere, more upright, more just, less subject to the control of his passions ; who will be a greater gainer by divine justice or the soul's immortality ? Do you know any man more nervous, more sublime, more convincing in a dispute than Lord B—— ? Is there any person by his virtue more worthy of entering on the defence of the cause of God, more certain of his existence, more sincerely penetrated with the idea of divine majesty, more zealous for his glory, and more capable of supporting it ? Yet you have been a witness of what passed during three months at Clarens : you have seen two men, having the highest esteem and respect for each other, and equally disdainful of the pedantry and quirk of scholastic logic, pass a whole winter in prudent and peaceful, as well as lively and profound argumentations, with a view to convert each other ; you have seen them attack and defend themselves, and take every advantage of which human understanding is capable : and that on a subject wherein both, being

equally interested, desired nothing so earnestly as to be of one mind.

What was the consequence? their mutual esteem is augmented, and yet both retain their former sentiments; if such an example does not for ever cure a prudent man of the rage of dispute, the love of truth I am sure never will.

For my part, I have thrown aside, and that for ever, such an useless weapon; and am determined never to mention a single word more to my husband about religion, unless it be to give a reason for mine. Not that a notion of divine toleration has rendered me indifferent to his. I must confess, that though I am become tranquil about his future state, I do not find I am the less zealous for his conversion. I would lay down my life to see him once convinced of the truth of divine revelation, if not for the sake of his future happiness, at least for his happiness in this life. For, of how many pleasures is he not on this account deprived? What sentiments can give him comfort in his afflictions? What spectator excites him to those good deeds he performs in secret? What reward does he hope for from his virtue? How can he look upon death? No I hope he will not meet it in this terrible situation. There remains but one expedient more for me to try to prevent it; and to that I consecrate the remainder of my life. This is not to convince, but to affect him: to set him a prevailing example,

and to make religion so amiable, that he shall not be able to resist her charms. Ah! my friend! what a forcible argument against infidelity is the life of a true Christian? Do you believe there is a being on earth proof against it? This is the task I impose on myself for the future; assist me to perform it. M. Wolmar is cold, but not insensible. What a picture might we lay open to his heart? his friends, his children, his wife, all uniting to his edification. When, without preaching about God in our discourses, we shall demonstrate him by those actions which he inspires, by those virtues of which he is the author, by the pleasure we take in his service: when he shall see a sketch of Paradise in his own house; when an hundred times a day he shall be compelled to cry out: "Human nature is of itself incapable of this; something divine must prevail here."

If my enterprise pleases you, if you find yourself worthy to concur in it, come, and let us pass our days together, and never part more till death. If the project displeases or frightens you, listen to the dictates of your conscience; that will teach you your duty. I have no more to say. Agreeably to what Lord B—— intimates, I shall expect you both towards the latter end of next month. You will hardly know your apartments again; but in the alteration made in it you will discover the care of a good friend, who took a pleasure in ornamenting it for you. You will

find there, also, a small assortment of books, which she bought for you at Geneva, of a better taste than the *Adonis*; not but that, for the jest's sake, you will find that too. You must, however, be discreet; for, as she would not have you know this is her doing, I hasten to finish my letter before she comes to forbid my speaking of it. Adieu, my dear friend; our party of pleasure to the castle of Chillon will take place to-morrow without you. It will not be the better for that. The bailiff has invited us with our children, which leaves me no excuse; but I know not why, and yet I cannot help wishing we were safe returned.

LETTER CLIX.

FROM FANNY ANNET.

O SIR! O my benefactor! what tidings do they order me to write to you! Madam—my poor mistress—good God! methinks I see already how frightened you are! but you cannot see the affliction we are all in here.—But I have not a moment to lose—I must tell you—I must run—Oh! that I had already told you all!—what will become of you, when you know our misfortune? The whole family went out yesterday to dine at Chillon. The Baron, who was going into Savoy, to spend some days at the castle of Blonay, went away after dinner.

The company attended him a little way, and afterwards walked along the dike. Mrs. Orbe and the bailiff's lady went before with my master; my mistress followed, having hold by one hand of Harriet, and by the other of Marcellin. I came after with the eldest. His honour, the bailiff, who had staid behind to speak to somebody, came up; and joining the company, offered my mistress his arm; which, in order to accept of, she sent Marcellin to me. I ran forward to meet him, while the child did the same towards me; but in running, his foot slipped, and he fell, unhappily, into the water. I screamed out, when my mistress, turning her head, and seeing the child in the water, flew back in an instant, and threw herself in after him.

Unhappy that I am! why did I not throw myself in too! better had I been drowned on the spot! With difficulty I kept the eldest from leaping after its mother; who kept struggling with the other in her arms.—No boat nor people were at hand, so that some time passed before they could be got out of the water—the child soon recovered; but as for the mother—the fright, the fall, the condition she was in—ah! none knows better than I the danger of such a fall! she was taken out, and remained a good while insensible. The moment she came to herself, she inquired eagerly after the child—Heavens! with what transport did she embrace him! I thought

she was quite well again ; but her spirits lasted her but for a moment : she insisted on her being brought home, but she fainted away several times during the journey. By some orders she gave me, I saw she believed she should not recover. Her fears were, alas ! too true ! she will never recover. Mrs. Orbe is a good deal more altered than she. They are all distracted ; I am the most sensible in the whole house.—Why should I be uneasy ? ah ! my good mistress, if I lose you I shall never have occasion for another.—O my dear Sir ! may Heaven enable you to support this trial ! Adieu ! the physician is this moment coming out of the chamber. I must run to meet him—if he gives me hopes, I will let you know it. If I say nothing, you will know too well the cause.

LETTER. CLX.

FROM MRS. ORBE.

IMPRUDENT, unfortunate man ! unhappy dreamer ! you will now indeed never see her more—alas ! the veil—Eloisa is no more.—

She has herself written to you—I refer you to her letter : respect, I charge you, her last request. Great and many are the obligations you have to discharge on this side the grave—

LETTER CLXI.

FROM M. WOLMAR.

I WAS unwilling to interrupt the first transports of your grief: my writing to you would but have aggravated your sorrow, as I was no better qualified to relate than you to read our sad tale. At present, possibly, such a relation may not be disagreeable to both. As nothing remains but the remembrance of her, my heart takes a delight in recalling every token of that remembrance to my mind. You will have some consolation in shedding tears to her memory; but of that grand relief of the unfortunate I am constitutionally deprived, and am, therefore, more unhappy than you.

It is not, however, of her illness, but of herself, I would write. Another might have thrown herself into the water to save her child. Such an accident, her fever, her death, are natural, and may be common to other mortals: but the employment of her last moments, her conversation, her sentiments, her fortitude, all these are peculiar to Eloisa. She was no less singular in the hour of death than she had been during the whole course of her life; and as I was the sole witness to many particulars, you can learn them from me alone.

You already know that her fright, her agita-

tion, the fall, and the water she had imbibed, threw her into fainting fits, from which she did not recover till after she was brought home. On being carried into the house, she asked again for the child; the child was brought; and seeing him walk about and return her caresses, she became apparently easy, and consented to take a little rest. Her sleep was but short, and as the physician was not yet come, she made us sit round on the bed; that is, Fanny, her cousin, and me. She talked to us about her children, of the great diligence and care which her plan of education required, and of the danger of a moment's neglect. Without making her illness of any great importance, she foresaw, she said, that it would prevent her for some time from discharging her part of that duty, and charged us to divide it amongst us.

She enlarged on her own projects, on yours, on the most proper means to carry them into execution; on the observations she had made as to what would promote or injure them; and, in a word, on every thing which might enable us to supply her place, in the discharge of the duties of a mother, so long as she might be prevented from it herself. I thought so much precaution unnecessary for one who imagined she should be prevented from exercising such employment only for a few days: but what added to my apprehensions, was to hear her enter into a long and particular

charge respecting Harriet. As to her sons, she contented herself with what concerned their education in the earliest infancy, as if relying on another for the care of their youth.

But, in speaking of Harriet she went farther, extending her remarks even to her coming of age; and being sensible that nothing could supply the place of those reflections which her own experience dictated, she gave us a clear and methodical abstract of the plan of education she had laid down, recommending it to the mother in the most lively and affecting manner.

All these exhortations, respecting the education of young persons and the duty of mothers, mixed with frequent applications to herself, could not fail to render the conversation extremely interesting: I saw, indeed, that it affected her too much. In the mean time, her cousin held one of her hands, pressing it every now and then to her lips, and bathing it with tears at every reply: Fanny was not less moved; and as for Eloisa herself, I observed the big tears swell out of her eyes, and steal down her cheeks; but she was afraid to let us see she wept, lest it should alarm us. But I then saw that she knew her life was drawing towards its final period. My only hope was, that her fears might deceive her, and represent the danger greater than it really was. Unhappily, however, I knew her too well to build much upon such a deception. I endeavoured se-

veral times to stop her, and at last begged of her not to waste her spirits by talking so much at once on a subject which might be continued at our leisure. "Ah! my dear (replied she) do not you know that nothing hurts a woman so much as silence? and, since I find myself a little feverish, I may as well employ my discourse about useful matters, as prattle away the time about trifles."

The arrival of the physician put the whole house into a confusion which it is impossible to describe. All the domestics were gathered about the door of the chamber, where they waited with arms folded, and anxious looks, to know his opinion of their mistress's situation, as if their own destiny were depending. This sight threw poor Mrs. Orbe into such an agony of grief, that I began to be afraid of her senses. Under different pretences, therefore, I dismissed them, that their presence might no longer affect her. The physician gave us indeed a little hope, but in such vague terms, that it served to convince me there was none. Eloisa was also reserved, on account of her cousin. When the doctor left the chamber I followed him, which Clara was also going to do; but Eloisa detained her, and gave me a wink which I understood, and, therefore, immediately told the physician, that if there were any real danger he should as carefully conceal it from Mrs. Orbe as from the patient, lest her despair

should render her incapable of attending her friend. He told me the case was indeed dangerous, but that four-and-twenty hours being hardly elapsed since the accident, it required more time to form a certain judgment ; that the succeeding night might determine the fate of the patient ; but that he could not positively pronounce any thing till the third day. Fanny alone was by on his saying this, on whom we prevailed with some difficulty to trifle her emotions, and agreed upon what was proper to tell Mrs. Orbe and the rest of the family.

Towards the evening Eloisa prevailed with her cousin, who had sat up with her the preceding night, and was desirous of continuing her vigilance, to go to bed for some hours. In the meantime, the patient being informed she was to be bled in the foot, and that the physician was prescribing for her, she sent for him to her bed-side, and addressed him thus :

“ Mr. Bouillon, when it is necessary to flatter
“ a timid patient as to the danger of his case, the
“ precaution is humane, and I approve of it ; but
“ it is a piece of cruelty to lavish equally on all
“ the disagreeable remedies which to many may
“ be superfluous. Prescribe for me every thing
“ that you think will be really useful, and I will
“ punctually follow your prescriptions. But as
“ to those of mere experiment, I beg you will
“ excuse me : it is my body and not my mind

“ which is disordered ; and I am not afraid to
“ end my days, but to mispend those which re-
“ main. The last moments of life are too pre-
“ cious to be thrown away. If you cannot pro-
“ long mine, therefore, I beg you will at least
“ not shorten them, by preventing me from em-
“ ploying them as I ought. Either recover me
“ entirely, or leave me : I can die alone.”——

Thus, my friend, did this woman, so mild and timid on ordinary occasions, know how to exert herself in a resolute and serious manner at this important crisis.

The night was cruel and decisive. Suffocation, oppression, fainting, her skin dry and burning. An ardent fever tormented her, during the continuance of which she was heard frequently to call out *Marcellin*, as if to prevent his running into the water, and to pronounce also another name, formerly repeated on a like occasion. The next day the physician told me plainly, that he did not think she could live three days. I alone was made privy to this afflicting piece of information, and the most terrible hour of my life was that wherein I kept it a secret in my breast, without knowing what use to make of it. I strayed out alone into the garden, musing on the measures I ought to take ; not without many afflicting reflections on the misfortune of being reduced, in the last stage of life, to that solitude, of

which I was sufficiently tired even before I had experienced a more agreeable one.

I had promised Eloisa the night before, to tell her faithfully the opinion of the physician, and she had engaged me by every prevailing argument to keep my word. I felt that engagement on my conscience : but what to do I was greatly at a loss ! Shall I, said I to myself, in order to discharge an useless and chimerical duty, afflict her soul with the news, and lengthen the pangs of death ? To tell her the hour of her dissolution, is it not in fact to anticipate the fatal moment ? In so short an interval what will become of the desires, the hopes, the elements of life ? Shall I kill my Eloisa ?

Thus meditating on what I should do, I walked on with long and hasty strides, and in an agitation of mind I had never before experienced. It was not in my power to shake off the painful anxiety : it remained an insupportable weight on my spirits. At length I was determined by a sudden thought.

For whose sake, said I, do I deliberate ? for her's or for mine ? On whose principles do I reason ? is it on her system or on my own ? What demonstration have I of the truth ? In support of her system she also has nothing but opinion ; but that opinion carries with it the force of evidence, and is in her eyes a demonstration. What right have I in a matter which relates chiefly to her,

to prefer my opinion, which I acknowledge to be doubtful, to hers, which she thinks demonstrated? Let us compare the consequences of both. According to hers, her disposition in the last hour of her life will decide her fate to all eternity. According to mine, all that I can do for her will be a matter of indifference in three days. According to my system, she will be then insensible to every thing: but if she be in the right, what a difference will there be! eternal happiness or misery, perhaps—that word is terrible—wretch! risk thy own soul, and not hers.

This was the first doubt I ever had concerning that scepticism you have so often attacked; but it was not the last. This doubt, however, freed me from the other. I immediately resolved, and for fear my mind should change, ran directly to Eloisa's chamber, where, after dismissing every body from their attendance, I sat down by her bed-side. I did not make use of those trifling precautions which are necessary with little minds. I was indeed for some time silent; but she looked at me, and seemed to read my thoughts. Then holding out her hand, "Do you think (said she) you bring me news? No, my dear friend, I know it already; the cold hand of death is upon me; we must part for ever."

She proceeded, and continued with me a long conversation, of which I may one day give you

an account; and during which she engraved her testament on my heart. If I had indeed been ignorant of her disposition before, her temper of mind at this time would sufficiently have informed me.

She asked me if her danger was known in the house. I told her, every one was greatly apprehensive; but that they knew nothing for certain; and that the physician had acquainted me only with his opinion. On this she conjured me carefully to keep it a secret for the remainder of the day. "Clara (continued she) will not be able to support this stroke, unless it comes from my hand. I shall take upon me that afflicting office to-night. It is chiefly for this reason that I desired to have the advice of a physician, that I might not subject her unnecessarily, and merely on my own suggestions, to so cruel a trial. Take care that she may know nothing of it before the time, or you will certainly risk the loss of a friend, and your children that of a mother."

She then asked me after her father. I owned that I had sent an express to him: but took care to conceal from her, that the messenger, instead of contenting himself with delivering my letter, as I had ordered him, blundered out a story, from which my old friend, falsely collecting that his daughter was drowned, fell down stairs in a swoon, and hurt himself; so that he kept his bed at Blonay. The hopes of seeing her father affect-

ed her very sensibly ; and the certainty I had of the vanity of such hope had no small share in my uneasiness.

The paroxysms of the preceding night had rendered her extremely weak : nor did this long conversation at all increase her strength. In this feeble situation, therefore, she strove to get a little sleep in the day-time ; nor did I know till two days after, that she did not sleep the whole time. The family continued in great anxiety ; every one waiting in mournful silence for each other to remove their uneasiness, yet without daring to ask any questions, for fear of being told more than they wished to know. If there were any good news, they said to themselves, every one would be eager enough to tell it ; and the bad we shall know but too soon. In this terrible suspense they were satisfied, so long as they heard of no alteration for the worse. Amidst this dreadful silence, Mrs. Orbe only was active and talkative. As soon as she came out of Eloisa's chamber, instead of going to rest, she ran up and down the house, asking what the doctor said to the one and to the other. She had sat up all the preceding night, and could not be ignorant of what she had seen ; but she strove even to impose on herself, and to distrust the evidence of her senses. Those she interrogated always giving her favourable answers, encouraged her to ask others, which she

continued to do with such an air of solicitude and poignant distress, that whoever had known the truth could not have been prevailed upon to tell it her.

In the presence of Eloisa she concealed her anxiety, and, indeed, the affecting object which she had before her eyes was sufficiently afflicting to suppress her vivacity. She was above all things solicitous to hide her fears from Eloisa; but she could very ill conceal them. Her trouble even appeared in her affectation to hide it. Eloisa, on her part also, spared no pains to deceive her cousin, as to the true state of her case. Without making light of her illness, she affected to speak of it as a thing that was already past, seeming uneasy only at the time necessary to restore her. How greatly did I suffer, to see them mutually striving to comfort each other, while I knew that neither of them entertained that hope in their own breasts with which each endeavoured to inspire the other.

Mrs. Orbe had sat up the two preceding nights, and had not been undressed for three days. Eloisa proposed, therefore, that she should retire to her own bed: but she refused. "Well then (said Eloisa) let a little bed be made up for you in my chamber; if (added she, as if she had just thought of it) you will not take part of mine. Come, my dear (says she) what say you? I am not worse, and, if you have no objection, you shall

sleep with me." This proposal was accepted. For my part, they turned me out of the room, and really I stood in need of rest.

I rose early the next morning; and, being anxious for what might have passed in the night, as soon as I heard them stirring, I went into her chamber. From the situation in which Mrs. Orbe appeared the preceding evening, I expected to find her extremely agitated. In entering the room, however, I saw her sitting on the settee, spiritless and pale, or rather of a livid complexion; her eyes heavy and dead; yet she appeared calm and tranquil, but spoke little. As for Eloisa, she appeared less feeble than over-night; the tone of her voice was strong, and her gesture animated; she seemed, indeed, to have borrowed the vivacity of her cousin. I could easily perceive, however, that this promising appearance was in a great measure the effect of the fever; but I remarked also in her looks, that something had given her a secret joy, which contributed to it not a little; but of which I could not discover the cause. The physician confirmed his former opinion, the patient continued also in the same sentiments, and there remained no hope.

Being obliged to leave her for some time, I observed, in coming again into her apartment, that every thing appeared in great order. She had caused flower-pots to be placed on the chim-

ney-piece; her curtains were half open and tied back; the air of the room was changed; a grateful odour every where diffusing itself, so that no one would have taken it for the bed-chamber of a sick person. The same taste and elegance appeared also in her dishabille; all which gave her rather the air of a woman of quality, waiting to receive company, than of a country lady, who was preparing for her last moments. She saw my surprise, smiled at it, and, guessing my sentiments, was going to speak to me, when the children were brought into the room. These now engaged her attention; and you may judge whether, finding herself ready to part from them for ever, her caresses were cold or moderate. I even took notice that she turned oftener, and with more warmth, to him who was the cause of her death, as if he was become more dear to her on that account.

These embraces, sighs, and transports, were all mysterious to the poor children. They loved her, indeed, tenderly; but it was with that tenderness peculiar to their age. They comprehended nothing of her condition, of the repetition of her caresses, of her regret at never seeing them more: as they saw us sorrowful and affected, they wept; but knew nothing more. We may teach children to repeat the word death; but we cannot give them any idea of it; they neither fear it for themselves or others; they fear to suffer

gain, but not to die. When the excess of pain drew complaints from their poor mother, they pierced the air with their cries; but when we talked to them of losing her, they seemed stupid, and comprehended nothing. Harriet alone, being a little older than the others, and of a sex in which understanding and sentiment appear earlier than in the other, seemed troubled and frightened to see her little mamma in bed, whom she used always to see stirring about with her children. I remember that, on this occasion, Eloisa made a reflection quite in character, on the ridiculous vanity of Vespasian, who kept his bed so long as he was able to do any thing, and rose when he could do no more*. “I know not (says she) if it be necessary that an emperor should die out of his bed: but this I know, that the mother of a family should never take to her bed, unless to die.”

After having wept over the children, and taken every one of them apart, particularly Harriet, whom she kept some time, and who lament-

* This is not quite exact. Suetonius tells us, that Vespasian employed himself as usual, and gave audience on his death-bed: but perhaps he had done better to have risen to give audience, and to have gone to bed again to die. This I know, that Vespasian, if not a great man, was at least a great prince; but it is not a time to put on the comedian at the hour of death.

ed and sobbed grievously, she called them all three together, gave them her blessing, and, pointing to Mrs. Orbe, "Go, my children (said she), go, and throw yourselves at the feet of your mother: this is she whom Providence has given you, depriving you of nothing in taking me. Immediately they all ran to her, threw themselves on their knees, and, laying hold of her hands, called her their good mamma, their second mother. Clara stooped forward to embrace them, but strove in vain to speak; she could only utter a few broken and imperfect acclamations, amidst sighs and sobs that stifled her voice. Judge if Eloisa was not moved! the scene indeed became too affecting: for which reason I interrupted it.

As soon as it was over, we sat down again round the bed; and, though the vivacity of Eloisa was a little suppressed by the foregoing scene, she preserved the same air of content in her looks; she talked on every subject with all that attention and regard which bespeaks a mind at ease; nothing escaped her; she was as intent on the conversation as if she had nothing else to think of. She proposed that we should dine in her chamber, that she might have as much of our company as possible for the short time she had to live; you may believe this proposal was not on our part rejected.

The dinner was served up without noise, confusion, or disorder, but with as much regularity

as if it had been in the Apollo. Fanny and the children dined with us. Eloisa taking notice that every one wanted an appetite, had the art to prevail on us to eat of almost every thing; one time by pretending to instruct the cook, at another, by asking whether she might not venture to taste this or that, and then by recommending it to us to take care of our health, without which we should not be capable of doing her the service her illness required. In short, no mistress of a family, however solicitous to do the honours of her house, could in full health have shown, even to strangers, more obliging or more amiable marks of her kindness than those which dying Eloisa expressed for her family. Nothing of what I expected happened, nothing of what really happened ever entered my head. In short, I was lost in astonishment.

After dinner, word was brought up that the clergyman was come. He came as a friend to the family, as he often favoured us with a visit. Though I had not sent for him, as Eloisa did not request it, I must confess to you, I was pleased to hear he was come, and imagine the most zealous believer could not on the same occasion have welcomed him with greater pleasure. His presence, indeed, promised the removal of many of my doubts, and some relief from my perplexity.

You will recollect the motives for my telling

her of her approaching end. By the effect which, according to my notions, such a shocking piece of information should have had on her, how could I conceive that which it really had? How could I imagine that a woman, so devout as not to pass a day, when in health, without meditation, who made the exercise of prayer her delight and amusement, should at such a time as this, when she had but two days to live; when she was just ready to appear before her awful judge, instead of making peace with God and her conscience, amuse herself in ornamenting her chamber, chatting with her friends, and diverting them at their meals, without ever dropping a word concerning God's grace, or her own salvation? What could I think of her, and her real sentiments? How could I reconcile her conduct with the notions I had entertained of her piety? How could I reconcile the use she made of her last moments to what she had said to the physician of their great importance? All this appeared to me an inexplicable enigma; for though I did not expect to find her practising all the hypocritical airs of the devotees; it seemed to me, however, high time to think of what she judged of so much importance, and that it should suffer no delay. If one is devout amidst the noise and hurry of life, how can one be otherwise at the moment we are going to quit it, and when there remains no longer time to think of another?

These reflections led me farther than I thought I ever should proceed. I began to be uneasy, lest my opinions, indiscreetly maintained, might at length have gained too much upon her belief. I had not adopted hers, and yet I was not willing that she should have renounced them. Had I been sick, I should certainly have died in my own way of thinking, but I was desirous that she should die also in her's. These contradictory notions will appear to you very extravagant: I myself do not find them very reasonable: they were, however, such as really suggested themselves, at that time. I do not undertake to justify, I only relate them.

At length the time drew near, when my doubts were to be cleared up: for it was easy to see, that, sooner or later, the minister would turn the conversation on the object of his duty; and though Eloisa had been capable of disguising her sentiments, it would be too difficult for her to do it in such a manner that a person, attentive and prepossessed as I was, should not see through the disguise.

It soon after happened as I expected. To pass over, however, the common-place compliments with which this worthy clergyman introduced the subject, as well as the affecting manner in which he represented the happiness of crowning a well-spent life by a Christian exit; he added,

that he had indeed remembered her to have maintained opinions, on some points, different from those of the church, or such as may be most reasonably deduced from the sacred writings; but that, as she had never persisted in defending them, he hoped she would die, as she had lived, in the communion of the faithful, and acquiesce in all the particulars of their common confession.

As Eloisa's answer removed at once all my doubts, and differed a good deal from the commonplace discourses on such occasions, I shall give it you almost word for word; for I listened to it very attentively, and committed it to paper immediately after.

“Permit me, Sir (said she), to begin by thanking you for all the care you have taken to conduct me in the paths of virtue and Christianity, and for that complacency with which you have borne with my errors when I have gone astray. Filled with a due respect for your zeal, as well as gratitude for all your goodness, I declare with pleasure that it is to you I am indebted for all my good resolutions, and that you have always directed me to do what was right, and to believe what was true.

“I have lived, and I die in the Protestant communion, whose maxims are deduced from scripture and reason; concerning which my heart hath always confirmed what my lips uttered; and though I may not have had always that docility

in regard to your precepts which perhaps I ought, it has arisen from my ~~aversion~~ aversion to all kind of hypocrisy: that which I could not believe I could never profess; I have always sincerely sought what was most conformable to truth, and the glory of my Creator. I may have been deceived in my research; not having the vanity to think I have always been in the right. I may, indeed, have been constantly in the wrong; but my intention has been invariably good. This was as much as was in my own power. If God did not vouchsafe to enlighten my understanding farther, he is too merciful and just to demand of me an account of what he has not committed to my care.

“ This, Sir, is all I think necessary to say on the opinions I profess. As to the rest, let my present situation answer for me. With my head distracted by illness, and subjected to the delirium of a fever, is it now a proper time to endeavour to reason better than I did when in health, when my understanding was unimpaired, and as sound as I received it from my Maker?—If I was deceived then, am I less subject to be so now? and in my present weakness does it depend on me to believe otherwise than I did when in full health and strength of body and mind? It is our reason which determines our belief, but mine has lost its best faculties; what dependance then could be made on the opinions I should now adopt without

it? what now remains for me to do, is to appeal to what I believed before; for the uprightness of my intention is the same, though I have lost my judgment. If I am in an error, I am sorry for and detest it; and this is sufficient to set my heart at ease as to my belief.

“With respect to my preparation for death; that, Sir, is made; badly indeed I own, but it is done in the best manner I could: and at least much better than I can do it now. I endeavoured to discharge that important part of my duty before I became incapable of it. I prayed in health—when I was strong; I struggled with divine grace for favour; at present, now I am weak, I am resigned, and rely upon it. The best prayers of the sick are patience and resignation. The preparation of death is a good life; I know of no other. While I conversed with you, while I meditated by myself, while I endeavoured to discharge the duties which Providence ordained for me; it was then I was preparing for death: for meeting my God and judge at my last hour. It was then I adored him with all my faculties and powers: what more can I now do, when I have lost them? Is my languid soul in a condition to raise itself to the Almighty? This remnant of half extinguished life, absorbed in pain, is it worthy of being offered up to God? No, Sir, he leaves it me to employ it for those he taught me to love, and from whom it is his love-

reign will that I should now depart: I am going to leave them to go to him; it is, therefore, with them I should now concern myself; I shall soon have nothing to do but with him alone: the last pleasure I take on earth shall be in doing my last duty; is not that to serve him and do his will! to discharge all those duties which humanity enjoins me before I throw it off entirely? What have I to do to calm troubles which I have not? my conscience is not troubled; if sometimes it has accused me, it has done it more when I was in health than at present. It tells me now that God is more merciful than I am criminal, and my confidence increases as I find I approach nearer to him. I do not present him with an imperfect, tardy, or forced repentance, which, dictated by fear, can never be truly sincere, and is only a snare by which the false penitent is deceived. I do not present him with the service of the remnant and latter end of my days, full of pain and sorrow, a prey to sickness, grief, anxiety, death; and which I would not dedicate to his service till I could do nothing else. No, I present before him my whole life, full, indeed, of errors and faults, but exempt from the remorse of the impious, and the crimes of the wicked.

“To what punishment can a just God condemn me? The reprobate, it is said, hate him. Must he not first make me not love him? No, I fear not to be found one of that number. ①

thou great eternal Being ! Supreme Intelligence ! source of life and happiness ! Creator ! Preserver ! Father ! Lord of Nature ! God powerful and good, of whose existence I never doubted for a moment, and under whose eye I have always delighted to live ! I know, I rejoice that I am going to appear before thy throne. In a few days my soul, delivered from its earthly tabernacle, shall begin to pay thee more worthily that homage which will constitute my happiness to all eternity. I look upon what I shall be, till that moment comes, as nothing. My body, indeed, still lives : but my intellectual life is at an end. I am at the end of my career, and am already judged from what is past. To suffer, to die, is all that I have now to do, and this is Nature's work. I have endeavoured to live in such a manner, as to have no occasion to concern myself at death ; and now it approaches, I see it without fear. Those who sleep in the bosom of a father are in no fear of being awaked."

This discourse, begun in a grave and slow voice, and ending in a more elevated and animated tone, made on every one present, myself not excepted, an impression the more lively, as the eyes of her who pronounced it seemed to sparkle with a supernatural fire ; rays of light seemed to encircle her brow ; and, if there be any thing in this world which deserves the name of celestial, it was certainly the face of Eloisa, while she was thus speaking.

The minister himself was transported at what he heard; and, lifting up his hands and eyes to heaven, Good God! (said he) behold the worship that truly honours thee! deign to render it propitious; for how seldom do mortals offer thee the like! Madam (continued he, turning to Eloisa, and approaching her bed), I thought to have instructed you, but have myself been instructed. I have nothing further to say. You have that true faith, which knows how to love God. Bear with you that precious repose and testimony of a good conscience, and believe me it will not deceive you. I have seen many Christians in your situation, but never before saw any thing like this. What a difference between such a peaceful end, and that of those terrified sinners, who implore Heaven with vain and idle prayers, unworthy to be heard. Your death, madam, is as exemplary as your life: you have lived to exercise your charity to mankind, and die a martyr to maternal tenderness. Whether it please God to restore you to us, to serve us as an example, or whether he is pleased to call you to himself, to crown your virtue with its due reward, may we all, so long as we survive, live like you, and, in the end, follow your example in death; we shall then be certain of happiness in another life."

He offered now to take his leave; but Eloisa prevailed on him to stay. "You are one of my

friends (said she to him), and one of those I take the greatest pleasure to see; it is for those my last moments are so precious. We are going to part for too long a time to part so soon now." He was well pleased to stay, and I went out and left them.

At my return, I found the conversation continued still on the same subject; but in a less interesting manner. The minister complained much of that false notion, which makes religion only of use to persons on their death-bed, and represents its ministers as men of ill-omen. "We are looked upon (says he) in common, rather as the messengers of sorrow and death, than of the glad tidings of life and salvation: and that, because, from the convenient opinion of the world, that a quarter of an hour's repentance is sufficient to efface fifty years of guilt, we are only welcome at such a time. We must be clothed in a mourning habit, and affect a morose air; in short, nothing is spared to render us dismal and terrifying. It is yet worse in other religious professions. A dying Roman Catholic is surrounded by objects the most terrifying, and is pestered with ceremonies that in a manner bury him alive. By the pains they take to keep the devils from him, he imagines he sees his chamber full of them; he dies a hundred times with fear before he expires, and it is in this state of horror the church delights to plunge the dying sinner,

in order to make the greater advantage of his purse."

"Thank God (said Eloisa) that we were not brought up in those venal religions, which murder people to inherit their wealth, and who, selling Heaven to the rich, would extend even to the other world that unjust inequality which prevails in this. I do not at all doubt that such mournful ideas encourage infidelity, and create a natural aversion for that species of worship which adopts them. I hope (continued she, looking stedfastly at me) that he who may educate our children will adopt very different maxims: and that he will not represent religion to them as a mournful exercise, by continually setting before them the prospect of death. If they learn once but to live well, they will of themselves know how to die."

In the continuation of this discourse, which became less affecting and more interrupted than I shall tell you, I fully comprehended the maxims of Eloisa, and the conduct at which I had been surprised. It appeared that, perceiving her situation quite desperate, she contrived only to remove that useless and mournful appearance which the fear of most people when dying makes them put on. This she did either to divert our affliction, or to banish from her own view a spectacle so moving, and at the same time unnecessary. "Death (said she) is of itself sufficiently painful!

why must it be rendered hideous? The care which others throw away in endeavouring to prolong their lives, I will employ to enjoy mine to the last moment. Shall I make an hospital of my apartment, a scene of disgust and trouble, when my last care will be to assemble in it all those who are most dear to me? If I suffer the air to stagnate, I must banish my children or expose their health to danger. If I put on a frightful dress and appearance myself, I shall be known no longer; I shall be no longer the same person; you will all remember to have loved me, and will be able to bear me no more. I shall, even alive, have the frightful spectacle of horror before me, which I shall be to my friends when I am dead. Instead of this, I have discovered the art to extend my life without prolonging it. I exist, I love, am loved, and live till the last breath forsakes me. The moment of death is nothing: the natural evil is a trifle; and I have overcome all those of opinion."

This, and a good deal of similar discourse, passed between the patient, the minister, sometimes the doctor, Fanny, and me. Mrs. Orbe was present all the while, but never joined in the conversation. Attentive to the wants of her friend, she was very assiduous to serve her, when she wanted any assistance; the rest of the time she remained immovable and almost inanimate: she kept looking at her without speaking.

and without understanding any thing of what was said.

As to myself; fearing that Eloisa would talk too much for her strength, I took the opportunity of the minister and physician's talking to each other aside, to tell her, in her ear, that she talked a great deal for a sick person, and reasoned very profoundly for one who conceived herself incapable of reasoning. "Yes (replied she, very low), I talk too much for a person that is sick, but not for one that is dying; I shall very soon have nothing more to say. With respect to argument, I reason no more now: I have done with it. I have often reflected on my last illness; I am now to profit by my reflection. I am no longer capable of reflecting nor resolving; I am now only able to talk of what I have before thought of, and to practise what I have formerly resolved."

The remainder of the day passed away in nearly the same tranquillity, and almost in the same manner, as if no sick person was in the house. Eloisa, just as in full health, calm and resigned, talked with the same good sense and the same spirit; putting on, now and then, an air of serenity approaching even to sprightliness. In short, I continued to observe a certain appearance of joy in her eyes, which increased my uneasiness, and concerning which I was determined to come to an explanation.

I delayed it no longer than the same evening:

when, seeing I had an inclination to be left alone with her, she told me I had prevented her, for that she had something to say to me. "It is very well (replied I), but as I intimated my intention first, give me leave first to explain myself."

Then sitting down by her, and looking at her attentively, "My Eloisa (said I), my dear Eloisa, you have wounded my very soul. Yes (continued I, seeing her look upon me with some surprise), I have penetrated your sentiments; you are glad to die, you rejoice to leave me. Reflect on my behaviour to you since we have lived together; have I deserved on your part so cruel a desire?" At the instant she clasped both my hands in her's, and with a voice that thrilled my soul, "Who? I! (said she), I glad to leave you! Is it thus you penetrate my sentiments? Have you so soon forgot our conversation of yesterday?"—"At least (interrupted I), you die content—I have seen—I see it."—"Hold (said she), it is indeed true, I die content: but it is content to die, as I have lived, worthy the name of your wife. Ask of me no more, for I can tell you no more: but here (continued she, taking a folded paper from under her pillow), here is what will unfold to you the mystery." This paper was a letter which I saw was directed to you. "I give it to you open (added she, giving it into my hands), that after having read it you may de-

termine within yourself, either to send or suppress it, according as you think best. I desire, however, you will not read it till I am no more; and I am certain you will grant that request."

This letter, my dear St. Preux, you will find enclosed. She who wrote it I well know is dead; but I can hardly bring myself to believe that she no longer exists.

She questioned me afterwards, expressing great uneasiness about her father. "Is it possible (said she) that he should know his daughter to be in danger and she not hear from him! Has any misfortune happened to him? or has he ceased to love me? Can it be that my father, so tender a father, should thus abandon his child? that he should let me die without seeing him; without receiving his last blessing; without embracing him in my last moments. Good God! how bitterly will he reproach himself, when he comes to find that he will see me no more!"—This reflection so extremely afflicted her, that I judged she would be less affected to know he was ill, than to suspect his indifference. I therefore determined to acquaint her with the truth, and in fact found her more easy than under her first suspicions. The thoughts of never seeing him again, however, much affected her. "Alas! (said she) what will become of him when I am gone? Shall he live to survive his whole family?"

What a life of solitude will his be? It is impossible he should long survive!" At this moment nature resumed its empire, and the horrors of approaching death were extremely perceptible. She sighed, clasped her hands, lifted up her eyes to Heaven; and, I saw plainly, endeavoured to pray, with all that difficulty which she before observed always attended the prayers of the sick.

When it was over, she turned to me, and complaining that she felt herself very weak, told me she foresaw this would be the last time we should have an opportunity of conversing together. "I conjure you, therefore (continued she), by our sacred union, in the name of those dear infants, the pledges of our love, harbour no longer such unjust suspicions of your wife. Can I rejoice to leave you? You, the business of whose life it has been to instruct and make me happy! you, who of all the men in the world, were the most capable to make me so; you, with whom only perhaps I could have lived within the bounds of discretion and virtue! No! believe me, if I could set any value upon life, it would be that I might spend it with you." These words, pronounced with great tenderness, affected me to that degree, that as I pressed her hands frequently with my lips, I found them wet with my tears. I never before thought my eyes made for weeping. These tears were the first I ever shed since my birth, and shall be the last till the hour of my death.

After having wept the last for Eloisa, there is nothing left on earth that can draw from me a tear.

This was a day of great fatigue for poor Eloisa. Her preparation of Mrs. Orbe in the preceding night, her interview with the children in the morning, that with the minister in the afternoon, together with the above conversation with me in the evening, had quite exhausted her. She betook herself to rest, and slept better that night than on the preceding, whether on account of her lassitude, or that in fact her fever and paroxysms were less violent.

Early the next morning, word was brought me that a stranger, very indifferently dressed, desired very earnestly to speak particularly to Eloisa: and though he was informed of her situation, he still continued his importunity, saying his business related to an act of great charity; that he knew Mrs. Wolmar very well, and that while she had life remaining, she would take pleasure in exerting her benevolence. As Eloisa had established it as an invariable rule that no person, particularly such as appeared to be in distress, should be turned away, the servants brought me word of the man and his request: on which I ordered him in. His appearance was mean to the greatest degree, being clothed almost in rags, and having in his air and manner all the symptoms

of indigence. I did not observe, however, any thing further either in his look or discourse to make me suspicious of him; though he still persisted in his resolution of telling his business to none but Eloisa. I told him, that if it related to any remedy he might be possessed of to save her life, I would give him all the recompence he might expect from her, without troubling her in her present extremity. "No, sir (replied he), poor as I am, I desire not your money. I demand only what belongs to me, what I esteem beyond all the treasures on earth, what I have lost by my own folly, and what Mrs. Wolmar alone, to whom I owe it, can a second time restore."

This discourse, though unintelligible, determined me, however, what to do. A designing knave might indeed have said as much, but he could never have said it in the same manner. He required that none of the servants should be present, a precaution which seemed mysterious and strange! I indulged him, and introduced him to Eloisa. He had said that he was known to Mrs. Orbe; he passed by her, however, without her taking notice of him, at which I was a little surprised. Eloisa recollected him immediately. Their meeting was extremely affecting. Clara, hearing a noise, came forward, and soon remembered her old acquaintance, not without some tokens of joy, but these were soon checked by her affliction. One sentiment only engrossed her at-

tion, and her heart was insensible to every thing else.

It is needless, I imagine, to tell you who this person was; a thousand ideas will arise up in your memory, and suggest it. But whilst Eloisa was comforting him, however, she was seized with a violent stoppage of her breath, and became so ill that we thought she was going to expire. To prevent any further surprise or distraction, at a time when her relief only was to be thought on, I put the man into the closet, and bid him lock himself in. Fanny was then called up, and after some time Eloisa recovered from her fit; when looking round, and seeing us all in a consternation about her, she said, "Never mind, children, this is only an essay; it is nothing like so painful as one would think."

All was soon tranquil again; but the alarm was so great, that I quite forgot the man in the closet, till Eloisa whispered me, to know what was become of him. This was not, however, till dinner was served up, and we were all sat down to table. I would have gone into the closet to speak to him, but he had locked the door on the inside, as I had directed him; I was obliged, therefore, to have patience till after dinner."

During our repast, Du Bosson, who dined with us, speaking of a young widow who was going

to marry again, made some reflections on the misfortunes of widows in general; to which I replied, the fortune of those was still harder who were widows while their husbands were living. "That, indeed, sir (answered Fanny, who saw this discourse was directed to her), is too true, especially if such husbands are beloved." The conversation then turned upon hers; and, as she always spoke of him very affectionately, it was natural for her to do so now, at a time when the loss of a benefactress threatened to make that of her husband still more severe. This, indeed, she did in the most affecting terms, commending the natural goodness of his disposition, lamenting the bad examples by which he had been seduced, and so sincerely regretting his loss, that, being sufficiently disposed before to sorrow, she burst out into a flood of tears. At this instant the closet-door flew open, and the poor man, rushing out, threw himself at her feet, embraced her knees, and mingled his tears with hers. She was holding a glass in her hand, which immediately fell to the ground; while the poor creature was so affected with joy and surprise, that she had fallen into a fit, had not proper care been instantly taken to prevent it.

What followed is easily imagined. It was known in a moment over the whole house that Claud Anet was come, the husband of our good Fanny! What a festival! He was hardly got out

chamber before he was stripped of his tattered and dressed in a decent manner. Had each of his servants had but two shirts a piece, Anet soon have had as many as them all. They indeed, so far prevented me, that when I went out, with a design to get him equipped, I was obliged to make use of my authority, to oblige them to take back the clothes they had furnished him with.

In the mean time, Fanny would not leave her sister: in order, however, to give her an opportunity of an hour or two's conversation with her sister, we pretended the children wanted to go out airing, and sent them both to take care of them.

This scene did not disturb Eloisa so much as the preceding ones. There was nothing in it disagreeable, and it rather did her good than harm.

Clara and I passed the afternoon with her, ourselves, and had two hours of calm uninterrupted conversation, which she rendered the most agreeable and interesting of any we had experienced in our lives.

I opened it with some observations on the interesting scene we had just beheld, and which recurred strongly to her mind the times of her early life.

Then following the order of events, she gave a short recapitulation of the incidents of her life, with a view to show, that, taking it for all

in all, she had been fortunate and happy; that she had risen gradually to the highest pinnacle of earthly happiness, and that the accident which now cut her off in the middle of her days, seemed in all appearance according to the natural course of things, to mark the point of separation between the good and evil of mortal life.

She expressed her gratitude to Heaven, in that it had been pleased to give her a susceptible and benevolent heart, a sound understanding, and an agreeable person; in that it had been pleased to give her birth in a land of liberty, and not in a country of slaves; that she came of an honourable family, and not of an ignoble or criminal race; that she was born to a moderate fortune, and not to the superfluous riches of the great, which corrupt the mind, or to the indigence of the poor, which debases it. She felicitated herself that she was born of parents, both of them good and virtuous, replete with justice and honour, and who, tempering the faults of each other, had formed her judgment on theirs, without subjecting her to their foibles or prejudices. She boasted the advantages she had enjoyed, of being educated in a rational and holy religion; which, so far from debasing, elevates and ennobles mankind; which, neither favouring impiety nor fanaticism, permits its professors to make use, at the same time, both of faith and reason, to be at once both devout and humane.

Then pressing the hand of Clara, which she constantly held in hers, and looking at her with the most affecting tenderness, "All these blessings (said she) I have enjoyed in common with others; but this one—this, Heaven reserved for me alone; I am a woman, and yet have known a true friend. Heaven gave us birth at the same time; it gave us a similarity of inclinations which have subsisted to this hour; it formed our hearts one for the other; it united us in the cradle; I have been blessed with her friendship during my life, and her kind hand will close my eyes in death. Find another example like this in world, and I have no longer any thing to say. What prudent advice hath she not given me? what perils hath she not saved me? what afflictions hath she not comforted me? what should I, indeed, have been without her? what should I not have been, had I listened more attentively to her counsel?"

Clara, instead of replying, leaned her head on the breast of her friend, and would have stifled her sighs by her tears: but it was impossible. Eloisa embraced her with the most cordial affection, and for a long time a scene of tearless silence succeeded.

When they recovered themselves, Eloisa continued her discourse. "These blessings (said she) were mixed with their inconveniences; such

is the lot of humanity! My heart was made for love; difficult as to personal merit, but indifferent to that opinion, it was morally impossible that my father's prejudices should ever agree with my inclinations. My heart required a lover of its own peculiar choice; such a one offered himself; I made choice of him, or rather, Heaven so directed my choice, that, though a slave to passion, I should not be abandoned to the horrors of my guilt, and that the love of virtue should still keep possession of my heart, even after I was criminal. He made use of the specious insinuating language of virtue, by which a thousand base men daily seduce our sex; but perhaps he only of all mankind was sincere. Did I then know his heart? Ah! no. I then knew no more of him than his professions, and yet I was seduced. I did that through despair which others have done through wantonness: I even threw myself, as my father reproached me, into his arms; and yet he loved and respected me; by that respect alone I began to know him truly. Every man capable of such behaviour must have a noble soul. Then I might safely have trusted him; but I had done that before, and afterwards ventured to trust in my own strength, and so was deceived."

She then went on to lavish encomiums on the merits of this unhappy lover: I will not say she did him more than justice, but the pleasure she

took in it was very obvious. She even praised him at her own expence, and by endeavouring to be just to him, was unjust to herself. She went even so far as to maintain that he held adultery in greater horror than she did; forgetting that he himself had disproved any such suggestion.

All the other incidents of her life were related in the same spirit. The behaviour of Lord B——, her husband, her children, your return, our friendship, every thing was set in the most favourable light. She recapitulated even her misfortunes with pleasure, as accidents which had prevented greater misfortunes. She lost her mother at a time when that loss was peculiarly felt; but if Heaven had been pleased to spare her, a disturbance, fatal to the peace of her family, might have been the consequence. The assistance of her mother, feeble as it was, would have been sufficient to strengthen her resolution to resist the will of her father, whence family discord and scandal would have arisen, perhaps some disaster or dishonour, and perhaps still worse, if her brother had lived. She had married a man, against her own inclination, whom she did not love; and yet she maintained, that she could not have been so happy with any other man, not even with the object of her passion. The death of Mr. Orbe had deprived her of a friend in the husband, but had restored her a more amiable one in

the wife. She even went so far as to include her uneasiness, her pains, in the number of blessings, as they had served to prevent her heart from being hardened against the sufferings of others. "It is unknown (said she) the delight of bemoaning our own misfortunes or those of others. A susceptible mind finds a contentment in itself, independent of fortune. How deeply have I not sighed ! how bitterly have I not wept ! and yet, were I to pass my life again, the evil I have committed would be all that I would wish retrenched ; that which I have suffered would be again agreeable." These, St. Preux, were her own words ; when you have read her letter they will perhaps seem more intelligible.

"Thus (continued she) you see to what felicity I was arrived. I enjoyed a considerable share of happiness, and had still more in view: The increasing prosperity of my family, the virtuous education of my children, all that I held dear in the world assembled, or ready to be assembled around me. The time present and the future equally flattering ; enjoyment and hope united to complete my happiness. Thus raised to the pinnacle of earthly bliss, I could not but descend ; as it came before it was expected, it would have taken its flight while I was delighted in the thoughts of its duration. What could Providence have done to have sustained me on the summit of felicity ? A permanent situation is not

the lot of mankind ; no, when we have acquired every thing, we must lose something, though it were from no other cause than that the pleasure of enjoyment diminishes by possession. My father is already in the decline of life, my children of an age when life is very uncertain : how many losses might not hereafter afflict me, without my having it in my power to console myself under one ! A mother's affection constantly increases, whilst the tenderness of her offspring diminishes as they are absent, or reside at a distance from her. Mine, as they grew up, would be taken from me : they would live in the great world, and might neglect me. You intend to send one of them to Russia ; how many tears would not his departure and absence cost me ! all by degrees would be detached from me, and I should have nothing to supply their loss. How often should I find myself not in the situation in which I now am going to leave you ! and, after all, I must still die. Die, perhaps, the last of you all, alone and forsaken ! the longer one lives, the more desirous we are of living, even when our enjoyments are at an end : hence I might survive till life became a burden, and yet should fear to die ; it is the ordinary consequence of old age. Instead of that, my last moments are now agreeable, and I have strength to resign myself to death, if death it may be called to leave behind us what we love. No, my friends, my

children, think not that I shall leave you; I will remain with you: in leaving you thus united, my heart, my soul, will still reside among you; you will see me continually among you; you will perceive me perpetually near you—the time will also come when we shall be united again; nor shall the virtuous Wolmar himself escape me. My return to God speaks peace to my soul, and sweetens the bitter moment that approaches: it promises me for you also the same felicity; I have been happy, I am still happy, and am going to be so for ever; my happiness is determined, beyond the power of fortune, to all eternity.”

Just then the minister entered. Eloisa was truly the object of his respect and esteem; nobody knowing better than he the liveliness and sincerity of her belief. He was but too much affected with the conversation he had held with her the day before, and above all with the serenity and fortitude he had observed in her. He had often seen persons die with ostentation, but never with such calmness. Perhaps also to the interest he took in her situation, was added a little curiosity, to see whether such her uncommon serenity would last to the end. Eloisa had no occasion to change the subject of discourse to render it more agreeable to the character of our visitor. As her conversation when in health was never on frivolous topics, so now she continued on her sick-bed, to talk over, with the same tranquillity, such sub-

jects as she thought most interesting to herself and her friends; speaking indifferently on matters by no means indifferent in themselves.

Thus, following the chain of her ideas relative to her notions of remaining with her friends, the discourse turned on the situation of the soul separated from the body; when she took occasion to admire the simplicity of such persons, who promised on their death-beds to come back to their friends, and bring them news of the other world. This (continued she) is just as reasonable as the stories of ghosts and apparitions, that are said to commit a thousand disorders, and torment credulous good women; as if departed spirits had lungs to scold, and hands to fight with*. How is it possible for a pure spirit to act upon a soul enclosed in a body, and which by virtue of its union with such body, can perceive nothing but by means of the corpo-

* Plato says, that the souls of the just, who have contracted no uncleanness on earth, disengage themselves by death of all matter, and recover their original purity. But as to the souls of those who had indulged themselves in filthy and vicious passions, they do not soon recover that purity, but drag along with them certain terrestrial particles, that confine them, as it were, to hover about the receptacles of their bodies. "Hence (says he) are seen those apparitions, which sometimes haunt burial places, &c. in expectation of new transmigrations."—It is a madness common to philosophers in all ages to deny the existence of what is real, and to puzzle their brains to explain what is only imaginary.

real organs? this is not to be conceived. I must confess, however, I see nothing absurd in supposing that the soul, when delivered from the body, should return, wander about, or perhaps reside near the persons of such as were dear to it in life : not indeed to inform them of its existence ; it has no means of communicating such information ; neither can it act on us, or perceive what we act, for want of the organs of sense necessary to that end ; but methinks it might become acquainted with our thoughts and perceptions, by an immediate communication, similar to that by which the Deity is privy to all our thoughts, and by which we reciprocally read the thoughts of each other, in coming face to face* : for (added she, turning to the minister) of what use can the senses be when there is nothing for them to do? The Supreme Being is neither seen nor understood ; he only makes himself felt ; he speaks neither to the eyes nor to the ears, but only to the heart."

I understood, by the answer of the pastor, and from some signs which passed between them, that the resurrection of the body had been one of the points on which they had formerly disputed. I perceived also that I now began to give more attention to the articles of Eloisa's religion, where her faith seemed to approach the bounds of reason.

* This seems to me to be well expressed ; for what can it be to meet the Deity face to face, but to be able to read the Supreme Intelligence.

She seemed to take so much pleasure in these notions, that, had she not been predetermined to abide by her former opinions, it had been cruelty to endeavour to invalidate one that seemed so agreeable to her in her present condition. What an additional pleasure (said she) have I not an hundred times taken, in doing a good action, in the imagination that my good mother was present, and that she knew the heart, and approved the intentions of her daughter ! There is something so comfortable in the thoughts of living under the eyes of those who were dear to us, that with respect to ourselves they can hardly be said to be deceased." You may judge whether Clara's hand was not frequently pressed during this discourse.

The minister had replied hitherto with a good deal of complacency and moderation ; he took care, however, not to forget his profession for a moment, but opposed her sentiments on the business of another life. He told her the immensity, glory, and other attributes of God, would be the only objects which the souls of the blessed would be employed in contemplating : that such sublime contemplation would efface every other idea ; that we should see nothing, that we should remember nothing, even in Heaven ; but that, after so ravishing a prospect, every thing earthly would be lost in oblivion.

" That may well be (returned Eloisa ;) there is such an immense distance between the lowness

of our thoughts and the Divine Essence, that we cannot judge what effect it may have on us, when we are in a situation to contemplate its beauty. But, as I have hitherto been able to reason only from my ideas, I must confess that I leave some persons so dear to me, that it would grieve me much to think I should never remember them more. One part of my happiness, say I, will consist in the testimony of a good conscience ; I shall certainly remember, then, how I have acted on earth : if I remember this, I cannot forget those persons who were dear to me ; who must still be so : to see * them no more, then, will be a pain to me, and pain enters not into the mansion of the blessed. But if, after all, I am mistaken, (says she, smiling); a mistake for a day or two will be soon at an end. I shall know, Sir, in a short time, more on this subject than even yourself. In the mean time, this I am well assured of, that so long as I remember that I have lived on earth, so long shall I esteem those I loved there, among whom my worthy pastor will not have the lowest place."

* It is easy to understand, that by the word *see* is here meant purely an act of the intellect, such as that whereby we are said to see the Deity, and the Deity to see us. We cannot perceive the immediate communication of spirits ; but we can conceive it very well ; and better in my opinion, than the communication of motion between bodies.

In this manner passed the conversation all that day, during which Eloisa appeared to have more ease, more hope and assurance than ever, seeming, in the opinion of the minister, to enjoy a foretaste of that happiness she was going to partake among the blessed. Never did she appear more tender, more amiable, in a word, more herself than at this time; always sensible, sentimental, possessing the fortitude of the philosopher and the mildness of a Christian. Nothing of affectation, nothing assuming or sententious escaped her; her expression always dictated by her sentiments with the greatest simplicity of heart: If sometimes she stifled the complaints which her sufferings might have drawn from her, it was not through affectation of a Stoical intrepidity: but to prevent those who were about her from being afflicted; and when the pangs of approaching death triumphed over her strength, she strove not to hide her sufferings, but permitted us to comfort her; and when she recovered from them a little, comforted us in her turn. In the intervals of her pain, she was cheerful, but her cheerfulness was extremely affecting; a smile sitting frequently on her lips, while the eye ran over with tears. To what purpose is that terror which permits us not to enjoy what we are going speedily to lose? Eloisa was even more pleasing, more amiable than when in health; and the last day of her life was the most glorious of all.

Towards the evening she had another fit; which, though not so severe as that in the morning, would not permit us to leave the children long with her. She remarked, however, that Harriet looked changed; and though we accounted for it, by saying she wept much and eat little, she said, "No, her illness was in the blood."

Finding herself better, she would have us sup in her own chamber; the doctor being still with her. Fanny also, whom we always used to send for when we chose she should dine or sup at our table, came up unsent for; which Eloisa perceiving, she smiled, and said, "Yes, child, come; you shall sup with me to-night; you may have your husband longer than you will have your mistress. (Then turning to me, she said,) I shall have no need to recommend Claud Anet to your protection."—"No (replied I,) whosoever you have honoured with your benevolence needs no other recommendation to me."

Eloisa, finding she could bear the light, had the table brought near the bed, and what is hardly to be conceived of one in her situation she had an appetite. The physician, who saw no danger in gratifying her, offered her a bit of chicken; which she refused, but desired a bit of fish, which she eat with a little bread, and said it was very good. While she was eating, you should have seen the looks of Mrs. Orbe; you should have seen, I say, for it is impossible to describe them.

What she eat was so far from doing her harm, that she seemed the better for it during the remainder of the repast. She was even in such good humour, as to take upon her to complain that we had been so long without wine. "Bring (says she) a bottle of Spanish wine for these gentlemen." By the looks of the physician she saw he expected to taste some genuine Spanish wine, and casting her eyes at Clara, smiled at the conceit. In the mean time, Clara, without giving attention to that circumstance, looked with extreme concern, sometimes at Elisia, and then on Fanny, of whom her eyes seemed to say, or ask, something which I could not understand.

The wine did not come so soon as was expected; the valet-de-chambre, who was entrusted with the key of the cellar, having taken it away through mistake. On inquiry, indeed, it was found that the provision intended for one day had lasted five, and that the key was gone without any body's perceiving the want of it, notwithstanding the family had sat up several nights. The physician was amazed; and for my part, at a loss whether I should attribute this forgetfulness to the concern or the sobriety of the servants, I was ashamed to make use of ordinary precautions with such domestics; and therefore ordered the door of the cellar to be broke open, and that for the future every one might drink at their discretion.

At length a bottle was brought us, and the wine proved excellent ; when the patient, having a mind to taste it, desired some mixed with water ; on which the doctor gave her a glass, and ordered her to drink it unmixed. Clara and Fanny now cast their eyes more frequently at each other, but with looks timid and constrained, as if they were fearful of saying too much.

Her fasting, weakness, and ordinary way of living, made the wine have a great effect on Eloisa. She perceived it, and said she was intoxicated. " After having deferred it so long (said she) it was hardly worth while to begin to make me tipsy now ; for a drunken woman is a most odious sight." In fact, she began to prattle, sensibly however, as usual, but with more vivacity than before. It was astonishing, nevertheless, that her colour was not heightened ; her eyes sparkled only with a fire moderated by the languor of her illness ; and excepting her paleness, she looked to be in full health. Clara's emotion became now extremely visible. She cast a timid look alternately on Eloisa, on me, on Fanny, and, above all, on the physician ; these were all expressive of so many interrogatories which she was desirous, but fearful to make. One would have thought every moment that she was going to speak, but that the fear of a disagreeable reply prevented her ; indeed her disquietude appeared at length so great, that it seemed oppressive.

Fanny, encouraged by all these signs, and willing to relieve her, attempted to speak, but with a trembling voice, faltered out that her mistress seemed to have been in less pain to-day—that her last convulsion was not so strong as the preceding—that the evening seemed—and there she stopped. Clara, who trembled like a leaf while Fanny was speaking, now fixed her eyes on the physician, listening with all her attention, and hardly venturing to breathe, lest she should not perfectly understand what he was going to say.

A man must have been stupid not to have guessed the meaning of all this. Du Bosson got up, felt the pulse of the patient, and said “Here is neither intoxication nor fever; the pulse promises well.” Clara rose up in a moment, and, addressing the doctor with the utmost impatience, would have interrogated him more particularly, but her speech failed her. “How, Sir! (said she)—the pulse! the fever!” She could say no more; but her eyes sparkled with impatience, and not a muscle in her face but indicated the most disquieting curiosity.

The doctor, however, made no answer, but took up the patient’s hand again, examined her eyes and her tongue, and having stood silent a while, said, “I understand you, madam; but it is impossible for me to say any thing positively at present, only this, that if the patient is in the

same situation at this hour to-morrow morning, I will answer for her life." The words had scarce dropped from his lips before Clara, rushing forward quick as lightning, overturned two chairs and almost the table to get at him, when she hung round his neck, and kissed him an hundred times, sobbing, and bathing his face with her tears. With the same impetuosity she took a ring of value from her finger, and put it forcibly on his, crying out, as well as she could, quite out of breath, "O, Sir! if you do but restore her to us, it is not one life only you will be so happy as to save."

Eloisa saw and heard this, which greatly affected her; looking at her friend, therefore, she thus broke out, in a sorrowful and moving tone: "Cruel Clara! how you make me regret the loss of life! Are you resolved to make me die in despair! must you be a second time prepared?" These few words were like a clap of thunder; they immediately extinguished her transports, but could not quite stifle her rekindled hopes.

The doctor's reply to Mrs. Orbe was immediately known throughout the house, and the honest domestics already conceived their mistress half restored. They unanimously resolved, therefore, to make the doctor a present on her recovery, to which each contributed three months wages, and the money was immediately put into the hands of Fanny; some borrowing of the others what

they wanted to make up their quota of the sum. This agreement was made with so much eagerness and haste, that Eloisa heard in her bed the noise of their acclamations. Think, my friends, what an effect this must have had on the heart of a woman, who felt herself dying. She made sign to me to come near, and whispered in my ear, "See how they make me drink to the very bottom, that bitter, yet sweet cup of sensibility."

When it was time to retire, Mrs. Orbe, who had partook of her cousin's bed, called her woman, and sat up that night to relieve Fanny; the latter, however, objected to that proposal, and seemingly with greater earnestness than she would have done, had not her husband been come. Mrs. Orbe persisted, notwithstanding, in her design, and both of them passed the night together in the settee. I sat up in the next chamber, but the dances which the domestics entertained had so animated their zeal, that neither persuasions nor threats could prevail on one of them to go to bed that night. Thus the whole house sat up all night under so much impatience, that there was not one of the family who would not have gladly given a whole year of his life to have had it nine o'clock in the morning.

I frequently heard them walking in her chamber during the night, which did not disturb me; and toward the morning, when things seemed

more quiet and still, I was alarmed at a low, indistinct noise that seemed to come from Eloïsa's room. I listened, and thought I could now distinguish the groans of a person in extremity. I ran into the room, threw open the curtain, and there—O St. Preux! there I saw them both, those amiable friends, motionless, locked in each other's embrace, the one fainted away, and the other expiring. I cried out, and hastened to prevent or receive her last sigh: but it was too late! Eloïsa was no more!

I can give you no account of what passed for some hours afterwards, being ignorant of what befel myself during that time. As soon as I was a little recovered from my first surprise, I inquired after Mrs. Orbe; and learned that the servants were obliged to carry her into her own chamber, where at last they were forced to confine her, to prevent her returning into that of Eloïsa; which she had several times done, throwing herself on the body, embracing, chafing, and kissing it in a kind of phrenzy, and exclaiming aloud in a thousand passionate expressions of a fruitless despair.

On entering her apartment, I found her absolutely frantic, neither seeing nor minding any thing, knowing nobody, but running about the room, and wringing her hands, sometimes muttering in a hollow voice some extravagant words, and at others, sending forth such terrible shrieks

make one shudder with horror. On the
of the bed sat her woman, frightened out of
vits, not daring to breathe or stir, but seek-
to hide herself, and trembling every limb.
ct, the convulsions which at this time agi-
the unhappy Clara had something in them
terrifying. I made a sign that her woman
d retire; fearing lest a single word of con-
on, untimely offered, might have put her in-
actual fury.

did not attempt, therefore, to speak to her;
: could neither have listened to, or under-
me; but observing, after some time, that
rength was quite exhausted with fatigue, I
d her on a settee; then sitting down by her,
olding her hands, I ordered the children to
ought in, and called them round her. Un-
ly, the first she took notice of, was him
vas the innocent cause of her friend's death.
ight of him, I could see, made her tremble;
ountenance changed, she turned away her
from him in a kind of horror, and strug-
o get her hands loose, to push him from her.
ed him then to me. "Unfortunate boy
)"; for having been too dear to the one,
re become hateful to the other: it is plain
hearts were not in every thing alike."
as extremely angry at what I said, and re-
it severely; it had nevertheless its effect in

the impression it made on her. For she immediately took the child up in her arms, and attempted to kiss him, but could not, and set him down again immediately. She did not even look upon him with the same pleasure as on the other, and I am very glad it is not this boy which is intended for her daughter.

Ye susceptible minds ! what would you have done in this situation ? Ye would have acted like Mrs. Orbe. After having taken care of the children, and of Clara, and given the necessary orders about the funeral, it was necessary for me to take my horse, and be the sorrowful messenger of the heavy tidings to an unhappy father. I found him still in pain from his hurt, as well as greatly uneasy and troubled about the accident which had befallen his daughter. I left him overwhelmed with sorrow ; with the sorrow of the aged, which breaks not out into external appearances, which excites neither transport nor exclamations, but preys inwardly and fatally on the heart. That he will never overcome his grief I am certain, and I can plainly foresee the last stroke that is wanting to complete the misfortunes of his friend. The next day I made all possible haste, in order to be at home early, and pay the last honours to the worthiest of women : but all was not yet over. She must be made to revive, to afflict me with the loss of her a second time.

I drew near my house, I saw one of my people come running out to meet me, who cried from as far as he could be heard; "Sir, sir, haste, make haste, my mistress is not dead!" I could not comprehend what he meant; but with all the haste I could, and found the court full of people, crying for joy, and calling aloud for blessings on Mrs. Wolmar. I asked the reason of all this? Every one was transfused with joy, but nobody could give me a reasonable answer; for as to my own people, their heads were absolutely turned. I made the end of my way, therefore, to Eloisa's apartment, where I found more than twenty persons on their knees round the bed, with their eyes attentively fixed on the corpse, which, to my great surprise, was dressed out, and lying on the bed: my heart trembled, and I examined into her situation. Alas! she was dead and cold! This moment of false hope, so soon and so cruelly extinguished, was the most afflicting moment of my whole life. I was not apt to be choleric, but I found myself on this occasion extremely angry, and resolved to go to the bottom of this extravagant scene. Everything was so disguised, so altered, so changed, that I had the greatest difficulty in the world to get to the truth. At length, however, I unravelled the mystery, and thus it was:—My father-in-law, being alarmed at the accident he had

heard, and thinking he could spare his valet-de-chambre, had sent him before my arrival, to learn the situation of his daughter. This old servant being fatigued with riding on horse-back, had taken a boat, and, crossing the lake, in the night, arrived at Clarens the very morning of the day in which I returned. On his arrival he saw the universal consternation the house was in; and, learning the cause, went sobbing up to Eloisa's apartment; where, throwing himself on his knees by the bed-side, he wept and contemplated the features of his departed mistress. Then giving vent to his sorrows, he cried out, "Ah! my good mistress! ah! why did it not please God to take me, instead of you! Me, that am old, that have no connexions, that can be of no more service on the face of the earth! but to take you, in the flower of youth, the pride of your family, the blessing of your house, the hope of the unfortunate, alas! was I present at your birth, thus to behold you dead!"—

In the midst of these and such like exclamations, which flowed from the goodness and sincerity of his heart, the weak old man, who kept his eyes still fixed on the corpse, imagined he saw it move: having once taken this into his head, he imagined further that Eloisa turned her eyes, looked at him, and made a sign to him with her head. Upon this he rose up in a great transport, and ran up and down the house, crying out his

els was not dead, that she knew him, and he was sure she was living, and would re-
 . This was sufficient to call every body
 her; the servants, the neighbours, and the
 , who before made the air resound with their
 ntations, now all as loudly cried out in trans-
 , "She is not dead! she lives! she lives!"
 noise spread and increased; the common
 le, all fond of the marvellous, readily propa-
 d the news: every one easily believed what
 wished might be true, and sought to give
 rs pleasure, by countenancing the general
 ulity. So that, in a short time, the deceased
 reported not only to have made a motion
 i her head, but to have walked about, to have
 versed, &c. more than twenty witnesses hav-
 had ocular proofs of circumstances that never
 ened or existed. No sooner were they pos-
 d with the notion of her being alive, but a
 sand efforts were made to restore her; they
 led in crowds about her bed, spoke to her,
 w spirits in her face, felt for her pulse, and did
 ry thing their foolish apprehensions suggested
 ecover her; till her woman, justly offended
 eeing the body of their mistress surrounded by
 umber of men, got every body turned out of
 room, and soon convinced themselves how
 egioussly they had been deceived. Incapable,
 ever, of resolving to put an end to so agree-

able an error, or perhaps still hoping for some miraculous event, they clothed the body with care, and though her wardrobe was left to them, they did not spare the richest apparel. After which, laying her out on the bed, and leaving the curtains open, they returned to their tears amidst the public rejoicings of the multitude.

I arrived in the height of this phrenzy, but when I became acquainted with the cause, found it impossible to bring the crowd to reason; and that if I had shut up my doors, and had ordered the immediate burial of the corpse, it might have occasioned some disturbance; or that I should have passed, at least, for a parricide of a husband, who had buried his wife alive, and should have been held in detestation by the whole country. I resolved, therefore, to defer the funeral. After six and thirty hours, however, I found, by the extreme heat of the weather, the corpse began to change, and, though the face preserved its features and sweetness, there seemed even there some signs of alteration. I mentioned it to Mrs. Orbe, who sat in a continued stupor at the head of the bed. Not that she was so happy as to be the dupe of so gross a delusion, but she pretended to be so, that she might continue in the chamber, and indulge her sorrows.

She understood my design, and silently with-

drew. In a moment after, however, she returned, bringing in her hand that veil of gold tissue embroidered with pearls, which you brought her from the Indies* : when, coming up to her bed, she kissed the veil, and spreading it over the face of her deceased friend, she cried out with a shrill voice, "Accursed be that sacrilegious hand which shall presume to lift up this veil! accursed be that impious eye which shall dare to look on this disfigured face !

This action and imprecation had such an effect on the spectators, that, as if by a sudden inspiration, it was repeated by one and all from every quarter. Such an impression, indeed, did it make on our servants, and the people in general, that the deceased being put into the coffin, dressed as she was, and with the greatest caution, was carried away, and buried in the same attire, without any person daring to touch the veil that covered her face†.

* It is clearly to be seen that the dream of St. Preux, of which Mrs. Orbe's imagination was constantly full, suggested the expedient of the veil. I conceive also that, if we examine into matters of this kind strictly, we shall find the same relation between many predictions and their accomplishment. Events are not always predicted because they are to happen ; but they happen because they were predicted.

† The people of this country, though Protestants, are extremely superstitious.

Those are certainly the most unhappy, who, beside the supporting their own sorrows, are under the necessity of consoling others. Yet this is my task with my father-in-law, with Mrs. Orbe, with friends, with relations, with my neighbours, and with my own household. I could yet support it well enough with all but my old friend and Mrs. Orbe : but you must be a witness to the affliction of the latter, to judge how much it adds to mine. So far from taking my endeavours to comfort her in good part, she even reproaches me for them ; my solicitude offends her, and the coldness of my affliction but aggravates hers ; she, would have my grief be as bitter and extravagant as hers ; her barbarous affliction would gladly see the whole world in despair. Every thing she says, every thing she does, looks like madness ; I am obliged, therefore, to put up with every thing, and am resolved not to be offended. In serving her who was beloved by Eloisa, I conceive I do a greater honour to her memory, than by fruitless tears and lamentations.

You will be able to judge, from one instance, of the rest of her behaviour. I thought I had gained my point, by engaging her to take care of herself, in order to be able to discharge those duties which her dying friend had imposed on her. Reduced very low by convulsions, abstinence, and want of rest, she seemed at length resolved to attempt her usual method of living, and to

come to table in the dining-room. The first time, however, I ordered the children to dine in the nursery, being unwilling to run the hazard of this essay in their presence; violent passions of every kind being one of the most dangerous objects that can be shewn to children. For the passions, when excessive, have always something puerile and diverting to young minds, by which they are seduced to admire what they ought to dread.

On entering the dining-room, she cast her eyes on the table, and saw covers laid for two persons only; at which she flung herself into the first chair that stood next her, refusing to come to table. I imagined I knew the reason, and ordered a third plate to be set on the table, at the place where her cousin used generally to sit. She then permitted me to lead her to her seat without reluctance, placing herself with great caution, and disposing her gown as if she was afraid to incommode the empty chair. On putting the first spoonful of soup to her mouth, however, she withdrew it, and asked, with a peevish air, what business that plate had there, when nobody made use of it? I answered, she was in the right, and had it taken away. She then strove to eat, but could get nothing down; by degrees her stomach swelled, her breath grew short; and all at once she started up, and returned to her own chamber.

without saying a word, or hearing any thing that I said to her, obstinately-refusing every thing but tea all that day.

The next day I had the same talk to begin again. I now conceived the best way to bring her to her reason was to humour her, and to endeavour to soften her despair by more tender sentiments. You know how much her daughter resembles Mrs. Wolmar ; that she took a pleasure in heightening that resemblance, by dressing her in the same manner, having brought some clothes for her from Geneva, in which she used to dress her like Eloisa. I ordered Harriet, therefore, to be dressed as much in imitation of Eloisa as possible, and, after having give her her lesson, placed her at table where Eloisa used to sit ; three covers being laid, as the day before.

Clara immediately comprehended my design, and was affected, giving me a tender and obliging look. This was the first time she seemed sensible of my assiduity, and I promised myself success from the expedient.

Harriet, proud to represent her little mamma, played her part extremely well ; so well, indeed, that I observed the servants in waiting shed tears. She nevertheless always gave the name of mamma to her mother, and addressed her with proper respect. At length, encouraged by success and my approbation, she ventured to put her hand to the soup spoon, and cried, "*Clara, my dear, do you*

choose any of this !" The gesture, tone, and manner in which she spoke this, were so exactly like those of Eloisa, that it made her mother tremble. A moment after, however, she burst into a fit of laughter, and offering her plate, replied ; " Yes, child, give me a little, you are a charming creature." She then began to eat with an eagerness that surprised me. Looking at her with some attention, I saw something wild in her eyes, and a greater impatience in her action and manner than usual. I prevented her therefore from eating any more, and it was well I did so ; for an hour after she was taken extremely ill with a violent surfeit, which, had she continued to eat more, might have been fatal. From this time I resolved to try no more projects of this kind, as they might affect her imagination too much. Sorrow is more easily cured than madness ; I thought it better, therefore, to let her suffer under the one a little longer, than run the hazard of driving her into the other.

This is the situation, my friend, in which we are at present. Since the Baron's return, indeed, Clara goes up every morning to his apartment, whether I am at home or abroad ; where they generally pass an hour or two together. She begins, also, to take a little more notice of the children. One of them has been sick ; this accident has made her sensible that she has still some-

thing to lose, and has animated her zeal to the discharge of her duty. Yet, with all this, she is not yet sufficiently sorrowful; her tears have not yet begun to flow; we wait for you to draw them forth, for you to dry them up again. You cannot but understand me. Think of the last advice of Eloisa; it was indeed first suggested by me, and I now think it more than ever prudent and useful. Come and be reunited to all that remains of Eloisa. Her father, her friend, her husband, her children, all expect you, all desire your company, which cannot fail of being universally useful.

In a word, without further explanations, come, partake and cure us of our sorrows; I shall, perhaps, be more obliged to you than to any other man in the world.

LETTER CLXII.

FROM ELOISA.

This letter was enclosed in the preceding.

OUR projects are at an end! Circumstances, my good friend, are changed: let us bear it without murmuring; it is the will of consummate Wisdom. We pleased ourselves with the thoughts of being reunited; such a reunion was not good for us. The goodness of Providence has prevented it, without doubt to prevent our misery.

Long have I indulged myself in the salutary delusion, that my passion was extinguished; the delusion is now vanished, when it can be no longer useful. You imagined me cured of my love; I thought so too. Let us thank Heaven that the deception hath lasted as long as it could be of service to us. In vain, alas! I endeavoured to stifle that passion which inspired me with life; it was impossible: it was interwoven with my heart strings. It now expands itself, when it is no longer to be dreaded; it supports me now my strength fails me; it cheers my soul even in death. O my friend? I can now make this confession without fear or shame: this involuntary sentiment has been of no prejudice to my virtue, it has never sullied my innocence: I have done my duty in all things that were in my power. If my heart was yours, it was my punishment, and not my crime. My virtue is unblemished, and my love has left behind it no remorse. Cousin

I glory in my past life: but who could have answered for my future years? Perhaps, were I to live another day, I should be culpable; what then might I not have been during whole years spent in your company? what dangers have I not run without knowing it? and to how much greater was I going to be exposed? Every trial has indeed been made, but trials may be too often repeated. Have I not lived long enough to be happy and virtuous? In taking me hence Hea-

ven deprives me of nothing which I ought to regret. I go, my friend, at a most favourable moment : satisfied with you and myself, I depart in peace.

I foresee, I feel your' affliction : I know too well you will be left to mourn ; the thoughts of your sorrow cause my greatest uneasiness : but reflect on the consolation I leave with you. The obligations left you to discharge, on the part of her who was so dear to you, ought to make it your duty to take care of yourself for her sake. You are left in charge with her better half. You will lose no more of Eloisa than you have long been deprived of. Her better part remains with you. Come and join her family, in the midst of whom Eloisa's heart will still be found. Let every one that was dear to her unite to give her a new being. Your business, your pleasure, your friendship, shall be her own work. The bonds of your union shall give her new life, nor will she totally expire but with the last of her friends.

Think there remains for you another Eloisa, and forget not what you owe her. You are both going to lose the half of yourselves ; unite, therefore, to preserve the other. The only method that remains for you to survive me, is to supply my place in my family, and with my children. Oh ! that I could but invent still stronger bonds to unite those who are so dear to

me ! but reflect how much you are indebted to each other, and let that reflection strengthen your mutual attachment. Your former objections against entering into such an engagement will now become arguments for it. How can either of you ever speak of me without melting into tenderness? No, Eloisa and Clara shall for the future be so united together in your thoughts, that it shall not be in the power of your heart to separate them. Her's will share in every thing yours has felt for her friend ; she will become both the confident and object of your passion. You will be happy in the enjoyment of that Eloisa who survives, without being unfaithful to her you shall have lost ; and after so many disappointments and misfortunes, shall, before the age of life and love is past, burn with a lawful flame, and possess the happiness of an innocent passion.

Secured by this ~~chaste union~~, you will be at liberty to employ your thoughts entirely on the discharge of those duties which I have recommended ; after which you need never be at a loss to account for the good you have done on earth. You know there exists also a man worthy of an honour to which he durst not aspire : you know him to have been your deliverer, as well as the husband of your friend. Left alone, without connexions in this life, without expectations from futurity, without joy, without comfort, without hope, he will soon be the most unfortu-

nate of merit. You owe to him the same pains he has taken with you, and you know the way to render them successful. Remember the instructions of my former letter. Pass your days with him. Let no one that loved me forsake him. As he restored your taste for virtue, so show him the object and the value of it. Be you truly a Christian, to engage him to be one too; the success of the attempt is more probable than perhaps you imagine. He has done his duty; I will do mine; and you must hereafter do yours. God is just, and my confidence in him will not deceive me.

I have but a word or two more to say, concerning my children. I know the trouble their education will cost you; but at the same time, I know you will not repine. In the most fatiguing moments of such employment, reflect that they are the children of Eloisa, and every thing will be easy. M. Wolmar will put into your hands the remarks I have made on your essay, and on the character of my two sons. They are, however, unfinished, and I leave them to you, not as rules for your conduct, but submit them as hints to your judgment. Strive not to make my children scholars, but benevolent and honest men. Speak to them sometimes of their mother—you know how dear they were to her—tell Marcellin I die willingly, as I saved his life. Tell his brother it

was for him I could have wished to live. Tell their—but I find myself fatigued—I must put an end to this letter. In leaving my children with you, I part with you with less regret; for in them I still continue with you.

Farewell, my dear friend! once more farewell. My life ends, alas! as it began. Perhaps I have said too much, at a time when the heart disguises nothing—ah! why should I be afraid to express all I feel? It is no longer I that speak: I am already in the arms of death. Before you read this letter, the worms will be preying on the features of your friend, and will take possession of a heart where your image will be found no more. But can my soul exist without you? Without you what happiness can I enjoy? No, we will not part—I go but to expect you. That virtue, which separated us on earth, will unite us for ever in the mansions of the blessed. I die in that peaceful hope; too happy to purchase at the expence of my life the privilege of loving you without a crime, and of telling you so once more.

L E T T E R CLXIII.

FROM MRS. ORBE.

I AM glad to hear that you begin to be so well recovered as to give us hopes of seeing you soon here. You must, my friend, endeavour to get

the better of your weakness; and try to pass the mountains before the winter prevents you. The air of this country will agree with you; you will see here nothing but sorrow; and perhaps our common affliction will be the means of soothing yours. Mine stands greatly in need of your assistance; for I can neither weep, nor speak, nor make myself understood. M. Wolmar, indeed, understands me, but he makes me no answer. The affliction of an unfortunate father also is buried within himself; nor can any thing be conceived more cruelly tormenting; he neither hears, sees, nor understands any thing. Age has no vent for its griefs. My children affect me, without knowing how to be affected themselves. I am solitary in the midst of company; a mournful silence prevails around me; and in the stupidity of my affliction, I speak to nobody, having but just life enough in me to feel the horrors of death. O come, you who partake of my loss, come and partake of my griefs. Come, cherish my heart with your sorrow. This is the only consolation I can hope for; the only pleasure I can taste.

But before you arrive, and inform me of your intentions relative to a project which I know has been mentioned to you, it is proper I should inform you first of mine. I am frank and ingenuous, and therefore will dissemble nothing. That I have loved you I confess, nay, perhaps I

love you still, and shall always do so: but this I know not, nor desire to know. I am not ignorant that it is suspected, which I do not concern myself about. But what I have to say, and what you ought to observe is this: that a man who was beloved by Eloisa, and could resolve to marry another woman, would, in my opinion, be so base and unworthy a creature, that I should think it a dishonour to call such a one my friend. And with respect to myself, I protest to you, that the man, whoever he be, who shall presume to talk of love hereafter to me, shall never have a second opportunity as long as he lives.

Think then only on the employment that awaits you, on the duties imposed on you, and on her to whom you engaged to discharge them. Her children are growing up apace, her father is insensibly wasting, her husband is in continual agitation of mind: in vain he strives to think her annihilated; his heart rebels against his reason. He speaks of her, he speaks to her, and sighs. Methinks I see already the repeated wishes of Eloisa half accomplished, and that you may put a finishing hand to so great a work. What a motive is here to induce both you and Lord B—— to repair hither. It is becoming his noble mind that our misfortunes have not made him change his resolution.

Come then, dear and respectable friends, come and rejoin all that is left of Eloisa. Let us assem-

ble all that was dear to her : let her spirit animate us ; let her heart unite ours ; let us live continually under her eye. I take a delight in conceiving that her amiable and susceptible spirit will leave its peaceful mansions to revisit ours ; that it will take a pleasure in seeing its friends imitate her virtues, in hearing herself honoured by their acknowledgments, in seeing them kiss her tomb, and sigh at the repetition of her name. No, she has not yet forsaken those haunts which she used to make so delightful. They are still full of her. I see her in every object, I perceive her at every step ; every hour of the day I hear her well-known voice. It was here she lived, here died, and here repose her ashes.—As I go, twice a week, to the church, I cast my eye on the sad, revered spot—O beauty ! is such thy last asylum !—Sincerity ! friendship ! virtue ! pleasure ! innocence ! all lie buried in her grave—I feel myself drawn as it were involuntarily to her tomb—I shudder as I approach—I dread to violate the hallowed earth—I imagine that I feel it shake and tremble under my feet—that I hear a plaintive voice call me from the hollow tomb—Clara* ! where art thou ? Clara ! why

* After having read these letters several times over, I think I have discovered the reason why the interest which I imagine every well-disposed reader will take in them, though perhaps not very great, is yet agreeable : and this is, because, little as it may prove, it is not excited by vile

dost thou not come to thy friend?—Alas! her grave hath yet but half her ashes—it is impatient for the remainder of its prey—yet a little while and it shall be satisfied!

lanies or crimes, nor mixed with the disagreeable sensations of hatred. I cannot conceive what pleasure it can give a writer, to imagine and describe the character of a villain; to put himself in his situation as often as he represents his actions, or to set them in the most flattering point of view. For my part, I greatly pity the authors of many of our tragedies so full of wickedness and horror, who spend their lives in making characters act and speak, which one cannot see or hear without shuddering. It would be to me a terrible misfortune to be condemned to such labour; nor can I think but that those who do it for amusement, must be violently zealous for the amusement of the public. I admire their genius and talents: but I thank God, that he has not bestowed such talents upon me.



THE
ADVENTURES
OF
LORD B— AT ROME.
WHICH EXPLAIN SEVERAL PASSAGES IN
THE FOREGOING LETTERS.
AND FORM THE SEQUEL
OF
ELOISA.

Found among the Author's Papers after his decease.)

35

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THE
ADVENTURES

OF

L O R D B——.

THE romantic adventures of Lord B——, at Rome, could not be joined with those of Eloisa, without destroying the simplicity of the latter. Such a succinct account of them is here given as may explain the few letters in which they are alluded to.

Lord B——, in the course of his excursions in Italy, had become acquainted with a Neapolitan woman of quality, of whom he soon grew enamoured in a high degree; and she on her side conceived a passion for him, no less violent, which preyed upon her spirits, and shortened her existence.

She knew the rigid virtue of the stern nobleman, which she was sensible would never allow him to gratify a criminal passion; but she knew also that his heart was no less vehement than sincere in all its affections. Great and extreme in every thing, she saw that he was incapable of feeling, and experienced that he did not fail to inspire any other than a violent attachment. The severity of his virtue, therefore, alarmed, but did not discourage her, and prompted her to adopt the only expedient which could promote a

gratification of their mutual passion: She resolved to pass for a widow, during the absence of her husband, which was no difficult matter, for she and Lord B—— were both strangers in Rome, and the Marquis was with his regiment in the service of the emperor.

In this belief, Lord B—— was not slow to propose marriage; but the Marchioness alledging the difference of religion, and other pretexts, as an obstacle to a matrimonial union, a connexion was formed without its sanction, which they continued to indulge with equal rapture and delight, till Lord B—— discovered that the husband of his mistress was still living. Finding himself the involuntary instrument of a crime, which his great soul held in abhorrence, he was fired with rage, and loaded the Marchioness with the bitterest reproaches.

The Marchioness, lost to all sense of principle, thought only of the future gratification of her passion, and left no means untried to soothe and preserve her lover. Equally formidable by her wickedness, her ingenuity, and her charms, she at last in part succeeded. All that was criminal in their intercourse ceased; in every other respect the intimacy continued. Unworthy as she was to love, she felt the full force of that ennobling passion. Maddening with desire, she was yet reduced to the necessity of seeing, and seeing only, the man she adored, whom she could pre-

serve on no other terms; and this cruel, but voluntary self-denial of Lord B——, by irritating the desires of both, made them more ungovernable by constraint. The Marchioness tried every means to make her lover break his resolution; but her charms, her caresses, and her arts were equally fruitless. Lord B—— remained firm to his purpose; his great soul was inaccessible to guilt. The love of virtue was the greatest of his affections; he would have sacrificed his life to his mistress, but he could not prefer his mistress to his duty. Once, when the temptation became too powerful, the means he was on the point of taking to overcome it checked the Marchioness, and showed her the inefficacy of her attempts. The tyranny in which we are held by the senses, is not owing to our original weakness, but to our habitual depravity. Whoever abhors guilt more than he fears death, will never be guilty against his will.

Among the few energetic souls that exert an irresistible dominion over others, and raise them to their own sphere, was to be numbered Lord B——'s. The Marchioness hoped in time to produce upon him the alteration she desired; but the only change that took place was in her own sentiments. While the precepts of virtue dropt from his lips in the language of love, she was moved, she was melted even to tears: the sacred

flame reached her grovelling heart, which for the first time felt that justice and honour have power to charm; she began to have a relish for virtue: if rooted depravity could have been corrected, the Marchioness might have experienced such a reformation.

Love alone produced these emotions; the Marchioness's passion became more refined as it became more generous: with a constitution of fire, and in a climate where the senses rule despotic, she sacrificed her own pleasures to promote those of her lover; and, as she could not participate them, resolved at least that he should owe them to her alone. This was the favourable interpretation she gave to a measure which, to those who knew her character, and her knowledge of Lord B——'s, might appear only to have been a refinement of seduction.

She spared neither trouble nor expence in the researches she caused to be made all over Rome for a young person, docile and faithful; such a one was found with some difficulty. One evening, after a conversation more than usually tender, she presented her to Lord B——: "Dispose of her" (said she, with a smile), "let her reap the harvest of my love, but let that happiness be hers alone. It is enough for me, if her charms sometimes make you think of the object to whom you owe the enjoyment of them." She rose to retire;

Lord B—— caught hold of her :—“ Stop ! (said he) if you think me contemptible enough to avail myself of your offer in your own house, the sacrifice you make is of little value, and your love is thrown away upon a most unworthy object.” —“ Since you cannot be mine (said the Marchioness), though I would not willingly see you another’s ; yet, if love must resign his rights, allow him at least to bestow them. Let not my present be unacceptable to you. Are you afraid of becoming ungrateful ?” She then obliged him to take Laura’s address (so the girl was called), and made him swear he would renounce for ever all other connexions. It was impossible not to be moved ; and he was greatly so. He found it more difficult to restrain his gratitude than his passion ; and this was the only snare the Marchioness ever laid for him, in which he was in real danger.

This lady, who, like her lover, did nothing by halves, made Laura sup with her, as if to celebrate with greater pomp the most painful sacrifice that love ever made. Lord B—— gave free scope to the transports which inspired him ; every look was animated ; every gesture expressed the most exquisite sensibility ; every word breathed the most ardent passion. Notwithstanding Laura’s charms, he scarcely looked at her. She was not alike indifferent ; she looked, and saw in the true

picture of love an object to which she was hitherto a stranger.

After supper, the Marchioness dismissed Laura, and remained alone with her lover. She had foreseen the danger that assailed him in the present *tête-à-tête*, and so far her hopes were realized; but, when she expected he would sink under it, she deceived herself; all her efforts ended in making the triumph of virtue more glorious to him, and more painful to both. The admiration which St. Preux expresses of his friend's firmness, in one of his letters, refers to the incidents of this evening.

Lord B—— was virtuous; but he was a man. He possessed all the unaffected reality of true honour, and was unacquainted with those factitious observances which the world have substituted in its place, and seem to value so highly. After some days passed with the Marchioness in unavailing struggles, he found the danger increase, and, to shun his impending defeat, resolved rather to sin against delicacy than virtue.—He went to see Laura.

She started at the sight of him: perceiving her overwhelmed with melancholy, he set himself to dissipate it, and did not imagine that he should have much trouble in succeeding. He was mistaken.—His language displeased her—His caresses were worse received, and his offers rejected with

an air that taught him the refusal was not meant to enhance the value of a future favour.

So strange a reception stimulated and surprised him. Was he to show a girl of this description the same deference as a woman of honour? He exerted his privilege without scruple. Laura, finding her cries, her tears, her resistance, alike ineffectual, made a last effort, sprang to the other extremity of the room, and exclaimed with a peculiar animation of voice, "Kill me; then; you shall never effect your purpose otherwise." Her countenance, her gestures, her attitude, showed the sincerity of her expression: Lord B——, in mute astonishment, took her by the hand, made her sit down, seated himself by her, and fixing his eyes on her, waited in patient expectation for an explanation of her conduct.

She remained silent, keeping her eyes fixed on the ground; the quickness of her respiration, the throbbing of her heart, her whole appearance, evinced unspeakable agitation: "Lord B——, at last breaking silence, asked her what was the meaning of a scene so extraordinary? "Have I made a mistake (said he)? You are not, perhaps, Lauretta Pisana."—"Ah! would to Heaven I were not," (said she, with a tremulous voice).—"What! (replied he, with an insulting smile) you have then, I suppose, renounced your former profession."—"No (said she), I am still the same;

those who have been once what I am, are never any thing else." These words, and the tone in which they were pronounced, appeared to him so extraordinary, that he began to think the girl had lost her senses. "But why then, charming Laura (continued he) am I the only excluded person? How have I incurred your hatred?"—"My hatred! (cried she, with still greater vivacity) think you I loved those I admitted? You, and you alone, I can never suffer to approach me."

"But why, Laura? explain yourself: I do not understand you."—"And do you think I understand myself! All I know is, that you shall never come near me.—No! (exclaimed she, with eagerness) Never! Were I to find myself in your arms, I should recollect that they encircled a prostitute, and I should die of grief and vexation."

Her dejection dissipated as she spoke; but her eyes expressed the despair and anguish of her heart, which cut Lord B—— to the soul. Avoiding all disrespect, he assumed an air of tenderness and attention. She hid her face, she was afraid to meet his eyes. He took her affectionately by the hand. As soon as she felt his hand, she hung tenderly over it, and pressing it eagerly to her lips, bathed it with her tears, sobbing as if her heart would break.

This language, though sufficiently impressive,

was not explicit. Lord B— with difficulty prevailed upon her to speak to him more plainly. Modesty, so long extinguished in her breast, returned with love; and Laura had never felt so much shame in prostituting her person, as she did now in confessing her love.

The same moment produced and completed this extraordinary passion. Laura was lively and cheerful, with charms enough to inspire an attachment, and sensibility enough to return it. But seduced by unworthy parents in her earliest youth, libertinism had sullied the brightness of her charms. Hurried down the stream of degrading pleasure, love fled before her; the wretched spoilers of female innocence are alike incapable of feeling or inspiring that generous passion. The most combustible bodies do not blaze of themselves; let but a spark approach, and a conflagration follows. Such was the effect of the transports of Lord B— and the Marchioness on the heart of Laura. At a language so new to her, her heart thrilled with a thousand delightful emotions; her ears devoured every word, her eyes every gesture. The humid flame that sparkled in the lovers' eyes darted through hers; and pierced her very vitals; her blood ran tumultuous through her veins; at every accent that fell from Lord B—, her whole frame trembled in unison; the emotions shewn in his every ges-

ture, the passion expressed in his every feature, vibrated on the heart of Laura. Thus the first image she saw of love made her love the object in whom she saw it. Had Lord B—— been cold to the Marchioness, Laura perhaps would not have felt the passion for Lord B—— which consumed her.

This tumult of the senses, which for this first time she had experienced, was far from subsiding on her return home. The first sensations of a rising passion are irresistibly delightful; for a moment she gave into the full enjoyment of a pleasure so new to her; that moment passed, her situation flashed upon her with all its horrors. For the first time of her life she felt what she was, and the conviction overwhelmed her with dismay. All the consolations of hope, all the incentives of desire, which feed love's flame in others, served but to extinguish her's in despair. Her prospect was dreadful. In the possession of the man she loved, she saw the ignominy of an abject and vile thing loaded at once with caresses and contempt; in the gratification of the passion, she felt all the pangs and infamy of mercenary prostitution. Her own desires were her greatest torments; the easy gratification of them increased the horror of her situation; without honour, without hope, without resource, she became acquainted with love, only to regret the impossibility of enjoying its delights. Thus began her sufferings, which were to last

for ever; thus ended her raptures, which had been the child of a moment.

The fatal passion that lowered her in her own estimation, raised her in that of Lord B—. In showing a heart susceptible of love, she ceased to be despicable. But what consolation had he to give her? What had he to bestow on her, except those warm emotions that rise in a generous heart, impelled by its own feelings in favour of an object above contempt, yet only exciting pity, and bereft of every sentiment of honour, but so much as was necessary to feel its own shame?

He did what he could, however, to console her, and promised to come again to see her. He forbore to mention her way of life, even to exhort her to quit it. To what purpose should he increase her horror of it, seeing that very horror was already drawing her to desperation? Every word on such a subject must seem to have a particular intention, must seem to lessen the distance between them, and render possible an event which could never take place. The greatest misfortune of prostitution is, that even in quitting it, its infamy attends its unhappy victim.

After a second visit, Lord B—, with a munificence peculiar to his countrymen, sent her a japanned cabinet, and a number of rich English trinkets. She returned the whole, with this billet: "I have lost the right of refusing a present, yet I have the presumption to send back your's;

for, perhaps, you did not intend it as an expression of your contempt. If you send it a second time, it must of necessity be accepted; but, how cruel a generosity is your's!"

Lord B—— was struck with a billet, dictated at once by humility and pride. Without seeming to combat the infamy attached to her profession, Laura displayed a kind of dignity under it. She almost effaced her ignominy, by her consciousness of it. He had ceased to despise, he now began to esteem her. He continued to visit her, but never wounded her feelings by the offer of another present, and though he could not be proud of the passion she felt for him, he could not help being pleased with it.

He did not conceal his visits from the Marchioness; besides that he had no reason, it would have been an act of ingratitude to do so. She wished to be acquainted with every circumstance of those visits. He swore that the last familiarities had never passed between him and Laura. This instance of self-denial had an effect quite the reverse of what he expected. "What! (exclaimed the Marchioness, in a rage) you visit Laura, and the last familiarities have not passed between you? What inducement then have you to see her?" Hence arose an infernal jealousy in the mind of the Marchioness, which produced many attempts on the lives of Lord B—— and

Laura, and gnawed the heart that harboured it, till it was extinguished in death.

There were other circumstances which raised this ungovernable passion to its greatest height, and made the Marchioness again act in her true character. Lord B——, in the unstudied probity of his heart, was a stranger to delicacy. He presented to the Marchioness the cabinet and jewels which Laura had refused, and she accepted his present, not out of avarice, but because their intimacy warranted an interchange of that nature, in which, to own the truth, the Marchioness was no loser. Unfortunately she discovered the first destination of this present, and how it happened to come to her. In a moment the cabinet and its contents were thrown out of the window: Her breast now maddened with all the rage of slighted love, now swelled with all the pride of insulted rank.

Still, the more Laura felt her shame, the less she endeavoured to shake it off: she resigned herself to it through despair, and the disdain with which she viewed herself reached the profligates who courted her favours. She was not proud—what right had she to be so? But a profound sense of ignominy, which it was impossible to conceal—the melancholy of shame, for ever present to itself, though for ever smothered—the pangs of a heart that feels itself worthy of respect, yet covered with infamy—all these embittered the en-

joyments abhorred by love, and turned the edison pleasures into anguish and disgust. A respect hitherto unfelt by these degraded beings made them relinquish the manners of libertinism; an involuntary emotion allayed their transports, and, compassionating the fate of their victim, they retired weeping for her, and blushing for themselves.

A continual prey to the melancholy which consumed her, she pined in affliction. Lord B——, whose friendship for her increased every day, did every thing in his power to alleviate her sorrows. His presence did much towards comforting her—his conversation did more; it removed by degrees her despair. The grandeur and elevation of his sentiments passed as it were into her soul, and restored its long lost vigour. What effects might not be produced from lessons delivered by an adored lover, upon a heart exposed by fate to infamy, but formed by nature for virtue? In such a heart the seeds once sown were seen to bring forth fruit an hundred fold.

By his humane exertions, he brought her at length to think better of herself. "If there be no infamy truly indelible but that which attaches upon actual depravity, I feel within myself the means of effacing my shame. I can never escape the world's scorn, but I shall cease to merit it; I shall cease to despise myself. Having relinquished the practice of vice, the fater of contempt

loses its force. What signifies to me the contumely of others, while I possess the esteem of Lord B——? Let him but look at the work of his own hands with the complacency of delight, that alone will make me amends for every thing. Though honour should gain nothing by it, love will. Yes! let me give to the heart he inspires sentiments more worthy of him. Delightful emotion! Never will I again profane thy transports. Happiness is placed for ever beyond my reach. I know it. But, since to receive the caresses of love would be to profane them, never will I admit any other."

Her agitation was too violent to last long; but it subsided into calm determination. When she endeavoured to quit the way of life that caused it, a thousand unforeseen obstacles presented themselves. She perceived that the woman who has abdicated her right to her own person, cannot recover it when she will, and that reputation is a kind of legal barrier, the removal of which, leaves the person who has lost it almost without defence. She had but one way to avoid persecution, which was, to hurry into a convent; and abandon her house in some sort to pillage; for she lived in that opulence so common among those of her profession, especially in Italy, while they have the double advantage of youth and beauty. She had said nothing of her intention to Lord B——, conceiving that to talk of it before its execution

would be to destroy its value. As soon as she reached her asylum, she informed him of it by a letter, and entreated his protection against certain powerful persons, interested in the continuance of her profligacy, who might take offence at her retreat. He instantly repaired to her house, and came in time to save her effects. An opulent nobleman, venerable by worth and respectable by rank, pleading with force the cause of virtue, soon found in Rome, though a stranger, sufficient power to protect her in a convent, and even to secure to her when there the payment of an annuity left her by the cardinal to whom her wretched parents had sold her.

He went to see her. She was beautiful, penitent, and in love : to him she owed all she was — all she might afterwards be. What powerful claims upon a heart like his ! He came full of those sentiments which prompt virtuous minds to virtuous actions, and wanted only that one which was necessary to her happiness, and which it was not in his power to feel. Never did hope flatter her so strongly ; in the transports of her joy she felt herself already in that state to which those who have once fallen from it seldom re-ascend. “ Yes (said she) I am no longer vile ; a virtuous man makes me the object of his cares. Love, I no longer regret the tears you make me shed, the sighs you draw from me ; you have already overpaid me all. To you I owe my strength ; to

you the recompence that crowns it; when you taught me to know my duties, you became the first and greatest of them. What an ecstasy of happiness is reserved for me! It is love that elevates and inspires me; love that rescues me from infamy and guilt; never can that divine passion quit my heart, while virtue remains in it. Yes, Lord B——, if ever I become vile, I must first cease to love you!”

The circumstances of her retreat were noised abroad. Degenerate souls, who judge of others by themselves, could not imagine that the conduct of Lord B—— in this matter, was prompted by the impulse of virtue alone. So much attention bestowed on a person so beautiful, did not fail to excite injurious surmises. It soon came to the ears of the Marchioness, who had spies every where. Her bosom swelled with rage; and in the madness of her violence she divulged her own intrigue. The report of it reached the Marquis at Vienna, and brought him to Rome the following winter, to receive in the point of a sword the reparation of wounded honour.

Thus arose a double connexion, which, in a country like Italy, exposed Lord B—— to numerous dangers, sometimes on the part of an injured soldier, fierce in the avenging of his wrongs, sometimes on that of a jealous and vindictive woman, furious from the disappointment of her

passions, and sometimes from the lovers of Laura whom her loss had maddened to rage. A connexion singularly strange, which compensating its dangers by no gratification, divided him between two adoring mistresses, without possessing either; rejected by Laura whom he did not love, and rejecting the Marchioness of whom he was enamoured, he never swerved from virtue, it is true; but the sacrifice was to his passions, which he thought he made to virtue alone.

It puzzles imagination to conceive what kind of sympathy could unite two hearts so opposite as those of Lord B—— and the Marchioness; yet, in spite of this contradiction, they could never wholly break the chains that bound them to each other. Imagining that she had given herself a rival (and such a rival too!) the remembrance of her imprudent generosity increased the tortments of her rage. Scorn, reproach, outrage, threats, caresses, all her arts were tried to detach Lord B—— from so unworthy an object, in his intercourse with whom, she could never believe his heart had no share, he remained firm—he had made a promise. Laura had limited her hopes and her happiness to the pleasure of seeing him sometimes. Her virtue, yet in its infancy, had occasion for support, and the fostering care of him whose work it was, was necessary to bring it to maturity. This was his excuse to himself; in

which, perhaps, he unwillingly overlooked some part of the truth. Where is the man so rigidly severe, as to see, unmoved, the beauty of a charming object, who requests only the indulgence of her passion? Where is the generous heart, from which the tears of two bright eyes will not extort one struggling sigh? Where the benevolent mind, whose virtuous self-love is not gratified by the sight of the happiness it bestows? He had made Laura too amiable to feel nothing more than esteem for her. The Marchioness, baffled in all her attempts to make him quit the hapless girl, became furious; she conceived a kind of horror for him, yet had not the courage to abandon him. When his carriage approached, she shuddered at the sight; when she heard his footsteps on the stairs, her whole frame shook with rage and terror. His presence threw her into a paroxysm of contending passions: his stay was tormenting to her; his departure drew from her the most dreadful imprecations; during his absence, the anguish of her heart burst forth in tears of resentment, and she talked of nothing but vengeance. Her sanguinary temper prompted her to means of revenge worthy of herself. She hired assassins, who attacked Lord B—— at different times as he came out of Laura's convent. She laid several snares for Laura herself, to entice her to come abroad, that she might have her car-

ried off. Still Lord B—— was not cured. Escaping from her bravoës over night, he returned to her the next morning; by his chimerical project of raising her to virtue, he endangered his own, and augmented his weakness by indulging his zeal.

The Marquis, ill cured of his wound, died in Germany, perhaps of grief for his wife's bad conduct. This event, which should have removed the barrier between Lord B—— and the Marchioness, threw new obstacles in the way of their union. Her eagerness to avail herself of the recovery of her liberty appalled him. The bare doubt whether the Marquis's death might not have been occasioned by his wound, represented the wishes of his heart, and checked all its desires. The rights of a husband, he would say to himself, die with him with regard to every one except his murderer, against whom they rise from the grave, and stare him in the face. Though humanity, though virtue, though the laws were silent on this point, would not reason alone teach us, that human blood should not be the price of the pleasures attached to the perpetuation of the human race; otherwise the source of life would become the instrument of death, and mankind would perish by the means destined to preserve them.

He passed many years in this manner, divided

between two mistresses, in distracting irresolution; often wishing to relinquish both, and never able to renounce either; repelled by reason, but impelled by inclination, he became more enchained by every effort he made to break his fetters. Now the slave of passion, again swayed by duty, he became restless, posting constantly from London to Rome, and from Rome to London; still ardent, eager, impassioned, always manly, and never guilty, he owed to the greatest and best of hearts that firmness which he imagined was the work of reason alone. Still meditating follies, still rejecting the folly he meditated, he was ever ready, but never able to break his unworthy chains. It was in the first moments of uneasiness that he was near attaching himself to Eloisa; and it appears certain he would have done so, if he had not found himself anticipated.

Laura gained, every day, by her virtues, the ground which the Marchioness was every day losing by her vices. With equal perseverance their merits were unequal. The Marchioness, sunk in the degradation of habitual vice, had recourse to those substitutes for the gratification of her hopeless passion, which the pure flame of Laura had rendered her unable to endure. Every time Lord B—— returned to Italy, he found new perfections in Laura. She had learned

English; she had committed to memory all he had recommended her to read; she had acquired every kind of knowledge he seemed to value: it was her constant endeavour to mould her soul on his, and what remained of the original features, was no disgrace to the model. She was, at that time of life when every year gives lustre to beauty; the charms of the Marchioness being past the period of increase, were suffering a radical decay; and though she still preserved an air of sensibility which pleases, and penetrates; though she spoke the world's language of humanity, fidelity, and virtue, her discourse was a ridiculous contrast to her conduct; her reputation belied her words. Lord B——'s eyes were at last opened, and he ceased to entertain any further hope of her. He endeavoured to disengage himself by degrees, but was never able to do so entirely; and, though he made great progress in estrangement, he never attained complete indifference. His heart constrained him to the Marchioness; he was carried to her house by an involuntary power. No efforts can erase from a feeling heart the impression of a sentiment that once constituted its happiness. Her intrigues, her plots, and machinations, at last excited his entire contempt; but in despising, he could not cease to pity her; and he was never able to forget, how he had loved, or what he had felt for her charms.

Thus enslaved by his habits, rather than his inclinations, Lord B—— was never able to break the ties that enchained him to Rome. The charms of domestic endearments made him wish to become a husband and a father, before old age stole upon him. Sometimes he accused himself, not only of injustice, but ingratitude, towards the Marchioness, and imputed to her passion the vices of her nature. Sometimes he forgot Laura's first way of life, and his heart, involuntarily overleaped the barrier which honour interposed. Still ascribing to reason the allurements of inclination, he justified his last journey to Rome by the desire of confirming the cure of his friend, while he exposed himself to a trial, to which, but for the support of that friend, he would have fallen a victim.

The fate of this enterprise, and the description of its relative scenes, are to be found at large in letters CXLVIII and CLIII of this edition, which, added to the preceding short narrative, complete the story. Lord B——, beloved by two mistresses without possessing either, appears at first sight a ludicrous character. But his virtue gave him, within himself, a gratification more delightful than the enjoyment of beauty—a gratification without measure as without end. More happy in abstaining from pleasures than in exhausting them, he loved longer, continued free,

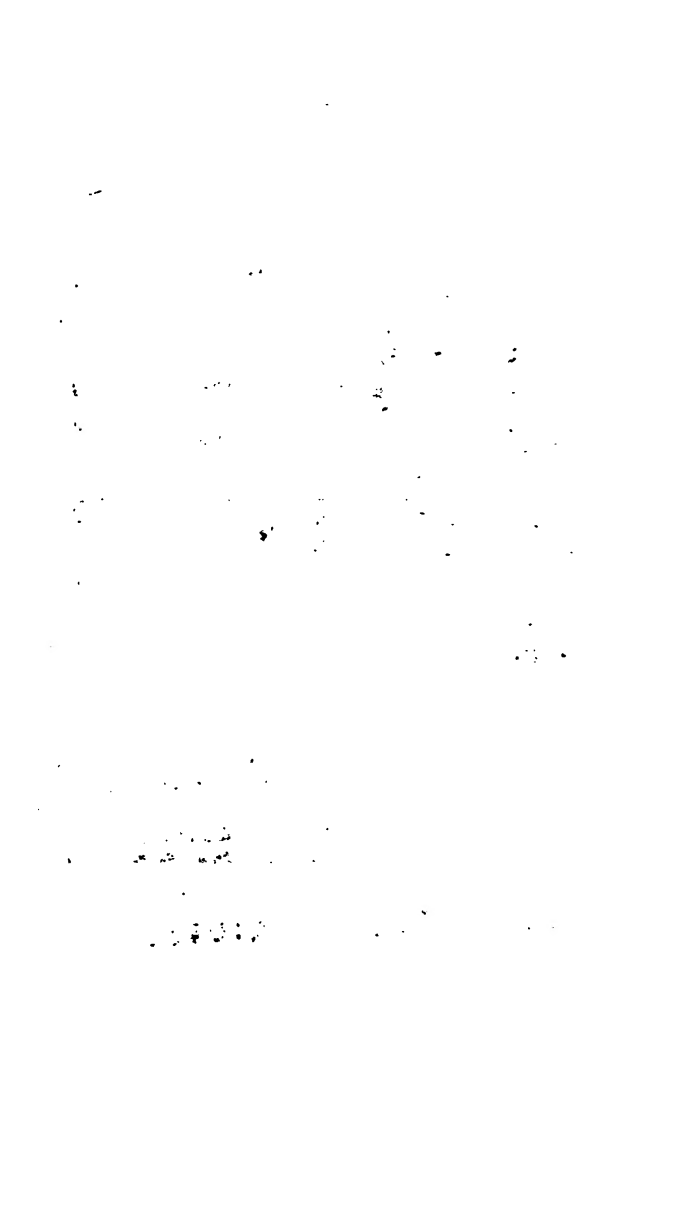
and enjoyed life more than the voluptuary who wastes it. Blind mortals, we lose an existence in the pursuit of chimeras, and refuse to see, that, of all the illusions of humanity, those of the just man alone lead to happiness.

THE END.

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